DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 419 109 CE 076 376

AUTHOR	Sherow, Sheila M.
TITLE	Building Communities for Learning. Final Report.
INSTITUTION	Center for Literacy, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
SPONS AGENCY	Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg. Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	121p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; *Community Cooperation; *Community Planning; *Cooperative Programs; *Educational Planning; Institutional Cooperation; *Literacy Education; Mentors; Program Implementation
IDENTIFIERS	353 Project

ABSTRACT

This document includes a final report, guidelines for mentoring communities, and a guidebook for community-based planning developed by the Building Communities for Learning (BCL) project conducted to encourage Pennsylvania communities to develop community-based planning groups to improve the delivery of services for adult learners and maximize adult learning outcomes. The project report describes how four communities received BCL community-based planning start-up grants; three BCL pilot sites assumed a new role as mentoring communities and provided new sites with field-driven training, technical assistance, and support; and all BCL groups received training and technical assistance. The report concludes that there is a great need for community-wide collaboration and community-based planning to improve services for adult learners and improve adult learning outcomes. Two appendixes provide profiles of BCL community-based planning pilot sites and evaluation instruments. The mentoring guidelines describe the following: BCL mentor characteristics, roles and benefits; building a mentoring relationship; impact of mentoring; and communication and critical thinking skills for mentors. The community-based planning guidebook addresses the following: establishing collaboration, recruiting planning group members, defining outcomes, setting goals, strategic planning, group process, evaluation, public relations, and sustainability. (KC)

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Building Communities for Learning

ED 419 109

Final Report

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1996-97

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Building Communities for Learning

Abstract

Purpose of the BCL Project: To encourage and assist communities in the development of community-based planning groups for the purpose of improving the delivery of services for adult learners and, ultimately, maximizing adult learning outcomes.

Audience: The audience for the BCL community-based planning includes, but is not limited to, adult learners, adult basic and literacy education providers, K-12 and other education providers, job training centers and programs, business and industry, public assistance and human resource services, local government, community economic development groups, and community health services.

Project Objectives: All objectives were met with the exception of recruiting nonfunded applicants as project participants.

- Four communities received BCL community-based planning start-up grants.
- The three BCL pilot sites assumed a new role as Mentoring Communities and provided new sites with field-driven training, technical assistance, and support.
- All BCL groups received training, and technical assistance.

Project Impact: BCL sites have already reported increased awareness of adult basic and literacy education programs and their services; increased public awareness of adult learning issues, needs, and achievements; improved communication among adult education stakeholders; smoother client transitions between programs; better client referrals among programs; and coordinated paperwork and reporting among programs and agencies.

Conclusions: There is a great need for community-wide collaboration and community-based planning to improve services for adult learners and, ultimately, adult learning outcomes.

1. Regardless of the size, location, or demographics of the community, local stakeholders were not fully aware of the types of programs and services offered to adult learners in their community.
2. Communities need to increase awareness of adult learning services, needs, and issues.
3. Active involvement of business and industry in community-based planning efforts was recognized as a priority, but remains a challenge for most groups.
4. Collaboration and community-based planning require time, training, knowledge, skills, and commitment.
5. Communities need training and technical assistance to guide the collaboration and community-based planning processes.
6. External support is needed for legitimacy and credibility, start-up funding, training and technical assistance, and ongoing guidance.

Introduction

Purpose and Objectives

The Building Communities for Learning (BCL) community-based planning project proposed to address the need for collaboration among adult learning stakeholders to improve the delivery of adult learner services and, ultimately, maximize adult learning outcomes. Although the need for collaboration within a community is well-documented, partnerships are often difficult to establish and maintain. Those attempting to develop partnerships often fail to understand what constitutes collaboration and there has been little direction on how to approach community-based planning for adult literacy services. In response, the BCL project developed a community-based planning model to support its overall objective to provide communities with start-up funding, training, and technical assistance including field-driven mentoring.

Project Background

Communities must collaborate to develop strategic plans to prepare for the changing characteristics, issues, and conditions that currently and will, in the future, challenge the provision of high-quality, comprehensive adult education services. In response, in 1994, the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy (PSCAL) coordinated a task force, representing a diverse group of adult literacy stakeholders, to explore and plan the implementation of a statewide project designed to initiate and guide the establishment of community-based planning groups. Three sites were involved in the BCL pilot project (Fayette County, Lycoming County, and Wyoming Valley). BCL pilot sites received training and technical assistance to guide and support collaboration and community-based planning efforts targeting the improvement of services to adult learners. The pilot sites remain active as community-based planning groups and assumed new roles as Mentoring

Communities during 1996-97.

Time Frame

During July through October 1996, a competitive Request for Proposals process was developed and conducted. The BCL project awarded four locales with start-up grants for the purpose of establishing community-based planning groups: Carbon County. Northern Cambria County, Pittsburgh, and Washington County. Simultaneously, the three BCL 1995-96 pilot sites assumed a new role as Mentoring Communities. Each new community was provided with training and technical assistance; three of the four groups were matched with a BCL Mentoring Community. The progress of the groups, in terms of establishing collaboration among local stakeholders and attaining local group goals, was monitored and evaluated over the term of the project.

Key Personnel

Sheila Sherow coordinated the BCL project for PSCAL. The Center for Literacy was the grantee as it serves as the fiscal agent for PSCAL. Members of PSCAL served as the advisory group for the BCL project, assisted with the RFP process, and disseminated information about the project. Seven communities were involved as BCL sites: Fayette County, Lycoming County, Wyoming Valley, Carbon County, Northern Cambria County, Pittsburgh, and Wyoming Valley. Representatives from each of the pilot sites served as mentors: Kim Hawk (Fayette County) Dan Merk (Lycoming County), and Mary Martino (Wyoming Valley).

Audience

The audience for this project includes, but is not limited to, adult basic and literacy education providers and consumers; preschool, K - 12, and post-secondary education providers; job training programs; job centers and other job placement services; public assistance and other human resource agencies; community economic development agencies and other planning groups; local government

agencies; business and industry and business associations; and chambers of commerce.

Sources of Dissemination

The BCL Final Reports and training materials are available through the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy (Joanne Shane Plummer, 403 Herr St., Harrisburg, PA 17102), the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, AdvancE, and the Western Pennsylvania Literacy Resource Center.

Organization of BCL Final Report

The BCL Final Report includes twelve chapters that have been organized in a manner designed to present the project as clearly and comprehensively as possible.

- Chapter One describes the rationale for the project in terms of the need for community-wide collaboration and community-based planning to improve the delivery of services for adult learners and, ultimately, improve adult learning outcomes.
- Chapter Two presents the project's goals and objectives. The project's objectives are interrelated and, as such, are not described in separate chapters.
- Chapter Three describes the project's procedures.
- Chapter Four reports that all project objectives were met with the exception of involving nonfunded communities in the project.
- Chapter Five analyzes why the nonfunded communities declined the invitation to become involved in the project.
- Chapter Six describes the project's evaluation strategy, summarizes the project's outcomes, and reports the impact of Mentoring Communities.
- Chapters Seven through Ten are profiles of the four 1996-97 BCL community-based planning sites and include project evaluation results.
- Chapter Eleven describes procedures for disseminating the BCL project model.

- Chapter Twelve reports project conclusions and makes recommendations.

BCL Training Materials

There are two BCL training publications.

- The BCL Guidebook for Community-Based Planning outlines basic strategies for community-wide collaboration and community-based planning.
- The Guide for Mentoring Communities describes the field-driven mentoring component of the BCL project and outlines basic mentoring techniques.

Building Communities for Learning

Chapter One

Statement of the Problem

Research indicates that an alarmingly large portion of American adults lacks adequate literacy skills to function effectively as workers, family members, and citizens. Compounding the already great need for adult basic and literacy education, changing adult learning priorities, issues, and conditions continue to upgrade basic skills requirements for functional literacy. Consequently, the need for a wide range of adult education services to meet the diverse needs of adult learners is increasing. However, resources for conducting and participating in adult education programming are limited; therefore, efforts must be made to maximize the use of existing resources through community-wide planning and coordination.

Adult education services and program enrollments can be increased and program quality can be improved if communities (1) collaborate and plan for the effective and efficient management of resources and (2) coordinate the delivery of existing services. Although the need for community-wide collaboration is well-documented, community partnerships are often difficult to establish and maintain. Those attempting to develop partnerships often fail to understand what constitutes collaboration and there is often a reluctance on the part of any one agency to assume the responsibility of establishing and maintaining community-wide collaboration.

External support is needed to initiate the formation of community-wide partnerships and to provide training and technical assistance in establishing collaboration among local programs and agencies. In addition, there has been little direction on how to approach community-based planning for adult basic and literacy education services. Once again, external support, training, and technical assistance

are necessary if groups are to succeed in their collaborative efforts to improve the delivery of adult learner services.

In response, the Building Communities for Learning (BCL) project provided four communities with external support, training, and technical assistance in the processes of collaboration and community-based planning for the purpose of developing coordinated, comprehensive delivery systems of adult learner services and improving adult learner outcomes.

Chapter Two

Goals and Objectives

The purpose of the BCL project was to provide and empower communities with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to improve, maximize, and sustain services to adult learners through collaboration and community-based planning. There were four goals, each with a specific set of objectives.

Goal 1: To add eight additional community-based planning sites to the BCL project.

Objective 1: To conduct a competitive Request for Proposals process to award four communities BCL community-based planning grants.

Objective 2: To recruit four nonfunded applicants to be involved in the project as community-based planning sites.

Goal 2: To create a field-driven training, technical assistance, and mentoring component to increase local expertise and involvement in the successful establishment of new community-based planning sites.

Objective 1: To guide the development of BCL pilot sites as Mentoring Communities prepared to provide new community-based planning sites with training, technical assistance, mentoring, and resources.

Goal 3: Statewide, to provide training and technical assistance.

Objective 1: To develop mentoring materials and guidelines to facilitate the development of pilot sites as Mentoring Communities.

Objective 2: To conduct a Mentoring Conference to guide pilot sites in their development as Mentoring Communities and involve the Mayor's Commission on Literacy (Philadelphia) and Tuscarora Intermediate Unit Cross-Training Projects as resources.

Objective 3. To provide Mentoring Communities and community-based

planning sites with ongoing training and technical assistance.

Goal 4: To evaluate the effectiveness of the BCL model.

Objective 1: To assess the effectiveness of BCL training, training materials, and technical assistance.

Objective 2: To assess the effectiveness of Mentoring Communities as trainers and mentors.

Objective 3: To assess the impact of community-based planning on adult literacy services.

Chapter Three

Procedures

1. A Request for Proposals (RFP) process was conducted during July, August, and September 1996 to expand the BCL pilot project to include four new community-based planning sites.

2. Four communities were awarded BCL grants: Carbon County, Northern Cambria County, Pittsburgh, and Washington County.

3. A field-driven mentoring component (Mentoring Communities) was developed to provide the new community-based planning sites with ongoing support and technical assistance.

4. The three BCL pilot sites (Fayette County, Lycoming County, and Wyoming Valley) agreed to assume a new role as Mentoring Communities.

5. Mentoring materials and resources were compiled and developed by the Program Coordinator to prepare BCL pilot sites for their role as Mentoring Communities.

6. A Mentoring Conference was conducted in October 1996 to provide BCL pilot sites (Mentoring Communities) with the community-based planning strategies and mentoring skills necessary to provide new BCL sites with the support and guidance needed to establish community-based planning groups.

7. Mentoring Communities were matched with new community-based planning sites and provided their mentoring partners with resources, technical assistance, and ongoing mentoring throughout the term of the grant.

8. Mentoring Communities and new BCL sites received ongoing, project-level training and technical assistance throughout the term of the project.

9. All BCL sites were monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis to guide local collaborative efforts and to measure project effectiveness and impact.

Chapter Four

Objectives Met and How

Objectives Met

All objectives were met with the exception of Objective 2 under Goal 1, to recruit the participation of four nonfunded applicants (see Chapter Five: Objectives Not Met and Why).

Goal 1: To add eight additional community-based planning sites to the BCL project.

Objective 1: To conduct a competitive Request for Proposals process to award four communities BCL community-based planning grants.

- Notification of the availability of funds and grant applications were distributed through the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth, Head Start, Even Start, State Library, employment and training, economic development, and public assistance and human services channels.
- Criteria for the review of proposals were developed by the Program Coordinator and a PSCAL Proposal Review Committee rated and ranked the proposals.
- The four top-rated proposals were awarded BCL grants: Carbon County, Northern Cambria County, Pittsburgh, and Washington County.
- Nonfunded applicants were invited to participate as community-based planning sites and were offered free training and technical assistance.

Goal 2: To create a field-driven training, technical assistance, and mentoring component to increase local expertise and involvement in the successful establishment of new community-based planning sites.

Objective 1: To guide the development of BCL pilot sites as Mentoring Communities prepared to provide new community-based planning sites with training, technical assistance, mentoring, and resources.

- All three BCL pilot sites (Fayette County, Lycoming County, and Wyoming Valley) enthusiastically agreed to assume new roles as Mentoring Communities.
- The role of mentor was assigned by pilot sites to specific group members.
- The Mentoring Communities were matched with a newly funded BCL site. (Pittsburgh did not receive a Mentoring Community partner; the Program Coordinator served as a mentor for this community-based planning group.)
- Matches were made based on similarities between groups and geographic location.
- Fayette County was matched with Washington County.
- Lycoming County was matched with Northern Cambria County.
- Wyoming Valley was matched with Carbon County.
- Initial meetings between mentoring partners were initiated by the Program Coordinator.
- Mentors met with and maintained ongoing communication with their partners throughout the term of the project.
- The Program Coordinator worked closely with the Mentoring Communities throughout the term of the project; providing mentors with support, coordinating training and technical assistance, and assisting with problem solving when needed.

Goal 3: Statewide, to provide training and technical assistance.

Objective 1: To develop mentoring materials and guidelines to facilitate the development of pilot sites as Mentoring Communities.

- Prior to the Mentoring Conference in October, the Program Coordinator compiled mentoring materials and resources and developed basic mentoring guidelines to help the BCL pilot sites prepare for their new roles as Mentoring Communities.
- During the Mentoring Conference, the mentoring materials and resources were reviewed and discussed in terms of the specific role and responsibilities of Mentoring Communities.

Objective 2: To conduct a Mentoring Conference to guide pilot sites in their development as Mentoring Communities and involve the Mayor's Commission on Literacy (Philadelphia) and Tuscarora Intermediate Unit Cross-Training Projects as resources.

- The Conference was held October 16 and 17, 1996 in State College and was attended by the individual(s) designated as mentors from each of the three BCL pilot sites: Fayette County-Kim Hawk and Lori Jacobs, Lycoming County-Dan Merk, and Wyoming Valley-Mary Martino.
- Program Directors and staff from the Mayor's Commission on Literacy (Philadelphia) and Tuscarora Intermediate Unit Cross-Training Projects also attended the Conference.
- During the Conference, BCL pilot sites, Cross-Training Projects, and the Program Coordinator reviewed and discussed (1) BCL training materials developed during the pilot project and (2) mentoring materials, resources, and guidelines compiled and developed by the Program Coordinator during the initial phase of the 1996-97 project.
- There was also considerable discussion pertaining to the role of BCL mentors and the perceived needs of the new community-based planning groups. It was decided that mentors would approach their mentoring relationships as they felt (1) best served the needs of their partner and (2) best utilized their own collaboration and community-based planning experiences, expertise, skills, and knowledge.

Objective 3. To provide Mentoring Communities and community-based planning sites with ongoing training and technical assistance.

- The Program Coordinator provided the three Mentoring Communities and the four new BCL sites with ongoing training and technical assistance throughout the term of the project.

- The Program Coordinator conducted site visits and maintained ongoing telephone, e-mail, and written communication with Mentoring Communities and new community-based planning sites throughout the term of the project.
- All sites received BCL training materials.

Goal 4: To evaluate the effectiveness of the BCL model.

Objective 1: To assess the effectiveness of BCL training, training materials, and technical assistance.

- The *Coalition Evaluation Instrument* (Applebee, 1993), questionnaires, and ongoing informal interviews with group members were used to collect data to demonstrate the effectiveness of BCL training, training materials, and technical assistance.

Objective 2: To assess the effectiveness of Mentoring Communities as trainers and mentors.

- A Mentoring Questionnaire was developed by the Program Coordinator and completed by Mentoring Communities and their partners to determine the effectiveness of field-driven mentoring.

Objective 3: To assess the impact of community-based planning on adult literacy services.

- Progress made toward attainment of goals and objectives was evaluated and documented on an ongoing basis to help guide the implementation of the project and provide direction for project improvement.
- *Impact Measures* (Bergstrom et al, 1995) were defined by groups to determine the impact of collaboration and community-based planning in four areas: adult learning, services development, system development, and resource development.

Chapter Five

Objectives Not Met and Why

The only objective that was not met was the successful recruitment of nonfunded sites as participants in the project. Applicants that were not funded were invited, but declined, to participate as community-based planning sites without start-up grants but with free training and technical assistance. It is believed that the primary reason they chose not to participate as nonfunded groups is because they had proposed specific community-based projects and were not really interested, at this time, in establishing community-based planning groups.

Start-up grants, although they are very small ($2,000), appear to convey a powerful message of external support and credibility that encourages participation of stakeholders. Failure to be awarded funding may diminish the motivation to participate.

Chapter Six

Evaluation Strategy

Both formative and summative evaluation techniques were implemented. Interim reports, questionnaires, site visits, and regular communication provided data throughout the grant and helped guide project improvements. Final reports, the *Coalition Evaluation Instrument, Impact Measures*, and the Mentoring Questionnaire provided summative data and, in comparison with data collected earlier in the project, indicated that the community-based planning groups continued to make progress throughout the project.

The Program Coordinator designed and was responsible for implementation of the evaluation strategy. Mentoring Communities evaluated the progress of their mentoring partners and reported second-year accomplishments of their community-based planning groups. New BCL communities did self-assessments of progress made toward the attainment of group goals and evaluated the effectiveness of Mentoring Communities. The following evaluation methods were used to collect data.

1. Interim and Final Reports

• Reports included open-ended questions pertaining to the establishment of the group, involving key stakeholders, setting goals, overcoming barriers, and realizing accomplishments.

2. *Coalition Evaluation Instrument* (Applebee, 1993)

• This is a self-assessment instrument using a Likert Scale to measure the group's perception of how they are progressing in the process of collaboration, specifically the setting and attainment of group goals, the definition of desired outcomes, the type and effectiveness of group leadership, the diversity of membership, member

participation and commitment, communication among members, and the level of trust among members.

3. *Impact Measures* (adapted from Bergstrom et al, 1995)

• Define desired outcomes as measures of impact in four areas: a) adult learning, b) services development, c) system development, and d) resource development.

4. Mentoring Reports

• Reports were submitted by Mentoring Communities reporting the challenges and accomplishments of their mentoring partners.

5. Mentoring Questionnaires

• Documented new groups' evaluations of the effectiveness of Mentoring Communities.

6. Site visits and regular communication by telephone, correspondence, and e-mail.

Summary of Project Outcomes

Group Membership

• Membership increased substantially in all groups and includes a diverse representation of stakeholders.

• The number of active members in all groups is fairly strong, but groups are focusing on efforts to increase active involvement of business.

Identification of Adult Learner Needs

• All groups have conducted needs assessments.

• All are in the process of producing brochures/directories listing all services available to adult learners.

• All are working to establish a community-wide adult learner referral system including a data transfer to eliminate duplication of paperwork.

Group Mission and Goals

- All groups have developed a common base of knowledge, shared vision, group mission, and group goals.

Interaction among Group Members

- There has been no open demonstration of turf issues or distrust, although two groups are aware of a slight reluctance on the part of some members to fully disclose information about their programs; this seems to be decreasing as trust builds.
- Groups have established positive and cooperative meeting environments that are conducive to discussion, problem solving, and decision making.
- Leadership is shared to some degree, more efforts are being made in this direction.

Results of Collaboration among Agencies and Programs

- Collaboration efforts have resulted in (1) increased knowledge of programs and services, (2) increased understanding among member agencies, and (3) improved and increased referrals among members.
- All groups are encouraging the sharing of resources but are at different points in this process.

Goal Attainment

- Initial, short-term goals have been met in all groups.
- All groups are striving to attain goals pertaining to business and media involvement.

Resources

- Some resources have been obtained locally, but this remains an area to be addressed more aggressively.
- The types of resources needed vary widely among groups and include funding for a variety of literacy, education, and support services; media coverage; legislative support; and state-level support for collaboration.

Results of the Mentoring Questionnaire

A Mentoring Questionnaire was developed by the Program Coordinator and completed by Mentoring Communities and their mentoring partners to assess the effectiveness of the field-driven mentoring component of the BCL model.

- BCL sites matched with a Mentoring Community found the mentoring relationships to be extremely beneficial and supportive. Mentors were able to share their own experiences in establishing their groups and understood the challenges, and sometimes frustrations, of bringing diverse groups of stakeholders together. Mentoring Communities also had a wealth of ideas and strategies that had proved to be effective, as well as some that had not worked as well as they had hoped. This, of course, was very helpful to the new community-based planning groups.
- Mentoring Communities, in turn, found that they learned more about the collaborative process and community-based planning through their affiliation with their partners. The new groups often had different perspectives and new ideas that the Mentoring Communities had not thought of or tried out.
- The field-driven mentoring component proved to be a very positive source of technical assistance and support. In addition, it developed a network among community-based planning groups that will, hopefully, prove to be beneficial to all groups on an ongoing basis.

BCL Mentors

The field-driven mentoring component of the BCL model was evaluated in terms of its impact on attainment of project and group goals. The following are descriptions of BCL mentors submitted by their mentoring partners.

Carbon County defined their BCL mentor as someone who:

- Understands your needs and helps you find ways to obtain them.
- Makes suggestions, but doesn't demand that you follow them.
- Listens to your ideas, comments on them, and assists you in "fleshing out" those ideas.
- Gives you positive reinforcement.
- Uses past experiences to help you avoid pitfalls and to prevent you from re-inventing the wheel.
- Gets to know the people you are working with.
- Realizes that your program is different and unique and can't be approached with a cookie cutter mentality.
- Shows you new ways to think about old programs.

Northern Cambria County

- Our mentor was of great assistance to our project.
- He has a knowledge base that he is willing to share.
- He has dealt with the struggles our group is experiencing and has helped us work through the issues.
- He has provided encouragement.
- In summary, he has provided (1) knowledge, (2) experience, (3) willingness to assist, and (4) encouragement.

Washington County

- The Fayette County Mentoring Community provided us with two mentors.
- Our mentors were superb.
- They clarified our purpose.
- They kept us on track.
- They gave us direction and suggestions.

Chapter Seven

Carbon County Adult Education Planning Community

(1996-97 Community-Based Planning Group)

Group Mission

The Carbon County Adult Education Planning Community (CCAEPC) is a group of interested individuals who are concerned about the future of adult education in Carbon County. The primary mission of this group is to act as a clearinghouse for literacy and adult education information for residents of Carbon County. In conjunction with this mission, the CCAEPC will:

- Publicize literacy and adult education events, classes, and programs.
- Share questions, concerns, and experiences for literacy and adult education advancement.
- Work as a collective organization for reporting and documenting Carbon County's literacy and adult education needs.

Group Goals

- To publish and distribute a directory of all involved individuals and agencies.
- To share literacy and adult education events and programs with the media and the general public.
- To develop and distribute a client recruitment model designed especially for the needs of Carbon County residents.

Membership

- Carbon County Action Committee
- Carbon County Administrator
- Carbon County Commissioners
- Carbon County Correctional Facility
- Carbon County Economic Development Board

- Carbon County Head Start
- Carbon County Housing Authority
- Carbon County Job Center
- Carbon County Parks
- Carbon County Volunteers for Literacy
- Carbon County Vo-Tech School
- Carbon-Lehigh Intermediate Unit
- Dimmick Memorial Library
- Gnaden Huetten Convalescent Home
- Horsehead Community Development, Inc.
- Job Training Partnership Act
- Kovatch Corporation, Inc.
- Lehigh County Community College, Carbon County site
- Lehighton Area School District
- Wyoming Valley Literacy Coalition
- Palmerton Hospital
- United Way of Carbon County

Accomplishments to Date

- The group has developed a pyramid flow chart of existing services and has identified gaps in program continuity.
- A brochure and poster have been developed and distributed county-wide.

Next Steps

- Involving private sector business and industry that have not previously demonstrated an interest in workplace literacy or county-wide adult education needs. Written and phone call invitations to meetings have not been successful thus far. Group members are going to try personal visits.

- Involving the five county school districts to help in the identification of residents who may need adult education services.
- Presentations to local government agencies, civic organizations, and businesses to spread the word about available opportunities.

Self-Assessment of Collaboration Process (Coalition Evaluation Instrument results)

Each group did a self-assessment and rated itself from 1 (low) to 5 (high) on each of 9 statements.

1. The degree to which goals have been defined and are understood and shared by group members.

Group rating = 5

2. Level of commitment group members have toward goals.

Group rating = 3

3. Definition of group outcomes that can be achieved by working together.

Group rating = 3

4. Effectiveness of leadership in moving the group toward the attainment of goals.

Group rating = 4

5. Commitment of members to working together to attain goals.

Group rating = 5

6. Level of communication among group members.

Group rating = 4

7. Level of openness and trust among group members.

Group rating = 5

8. Level of conflict resolution among group members.

Group rating = 5

9. Diversity of group membership.

Group rating = 5

Impact Measures

Carbon County identified desired outcomes in the four designated areas (adult learning, services development, system development, and resource development) to measure the impact of collaboration and community-based planning.

1. Adult learning: Adult learners will find it easy to obtain and understand information about Carbon County adult education opportunities.

- A brochure has been published and a poster designed for county-wide distribution.

2. Services development: Member agencies will think of other agencies and their available offerings when counseling clients.

- The literacy coordinator made a presentation to the county Interagency Council and discussed adult education opportunities.

3. System development: Member agencies will work collectively to document Carbon County's literacy and adult education needs.

- Member agencies are contacting each other with more frequency to discuss joint efforts.
- Head Start and the adult literacy agency are planning a trip together to view another county's Family Center.

4. Resource development: The use of the group's membership directory, brochure, and poster will allow county residents, businesses, and organizations to access adult education resources.

Comments

- Carbon County stakeholders understand the need to collaborate and share a vision for the future of adult learning in the county.
- The group has been successful in strengthening existing partnerships and establishing new collaborations.

- The group is on very solid ground but is still striving to get regular attendance at all meetings.
- There is some discussion about merging with the Carbon County Interagency Council to prevent extra meetings.
- The group has made business involvement a priority.

Chapter Eight

Northern Cambria County BCL Project

(1996-97 Community-Based Planning Group)

Group Mission

The group is refining their mission as the constituency is forming.

Group Goals

1. The group's short-term goal is to further build the constituency base and bring new agencies into the group.

2. Long-terms goals include:

- To increase the functional literacy of adults in northern Cambria County.
- To upgrade the skills of unemployed adults so they can re-enter the unsubsidized labor market.
- To increase public awareness of programs and services.

Membership

- Keystone Economic Development Group (Director)
- Admiral Perry Area Vocational-Technical School (Adult Education Coordinator)
- United Way of Greater Johnstown (Program Director)
- Cambria County Literacy Council (Director)
- Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission
- Cambria County Job Center
- Norcam
- University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown
- Penn State University-School-to-Work Resource Center
- New Choices (Director)
- Cambria County Library
- Appalachian Youth Services

- Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center
- Appalachia Intermediate Unit #8
- Collaborative Board
- Partnership for a Healthy Community

Accomplishments to Date

1. The group is providing an opportunity for organizations that have never collaborated to come together and develop a common mission.

2. The group is allowing agencies with differing missions to share their ideas and thoughts on how to develop a seamless system of services that can better meet the multiple needs of clients.

Next Step

- The group has identified three other collaborative groups in the region and are connecting with these groups to determine how they can all work together.

Self-Assessment of Collaboration Process (Coalition Evaluation Instrument results) Each group did a self-assessment and rated itself from 1 (low) to 5 (high) on each of 9 statements.

1. The degree to which goals have been defined and are understood and shared by group members.

Group rating = 3

- The original planning group has always agreed to and understood goals.
- Newly recruited members are excited about the effort and have a fair understanding of goals.
- Efforts are being made to increase understanding among new members.

2. Level of commitment group members have toward goals.

Group rating = 4

- Group members are committed to developing a comprehensive system of educational services for adults.
- Short-term goals that will lead to the attainment of long-term goals are being defined.

3. Definition of group outcomes that can be achieved by working together.

Group rating = 2

- The original planning group identified and agreed upon desired outcomes.
- New members are being involved in discussions regarding outcomes.
- Outcomes may be revised so all members can support them.

4. Effectiveness of leadership in moving the group toward the attainment cf goals.

Group rating = 2

- Leadership is now being shared.
- Leadership has hesitated moving forward until the group is ready.

5. Commitment of members to working together to attain goals.

Group rating = 4

- There is a definite overlap between individual member and group goals. This has resulted in excitement about and commitment to attainment of goals.

6. Level of communication among group members.

Group rating = 1

- The full group has just formed and communication among members is just beginning. A network is being established among group members to develop lines of communication.

7. Level of openness and trust among group members.

Group rating = 1

- The group is working to increase awareness and understanding among group members.

8. Level of conflict resolution among group members.

Group rating = can not be answered yet

9. Diversity of group membership.

Group rating = 4

- The group has expanded from 4 agencies to 17 agencies.
- Membership includes secondary schools, post-secondary schools, literacy providers, economic development agencies, employment agencies, and health agencies.
- The constituency is still increasing.

Impact Measures

Northern Cambria County identified desired outcomes in the four designated areas (adult learning, services development, system development, and resource development) to measure the impact of collaboration and community-based planning.

1. Adult learning

- Increase functional literacy of adults.
- Upgrade skills of unemployed adults.
- Increase adult learners' awareness of programs and services.

2. Services development

- Seamless network of services.
- Improve access to services.

3. Systems development

- Increase knowledge of services.
- Bridge existing networks among providers.
- Identify shared values.

4. Resource development

- Establish stable group of members.
- Designate responsibilities.
- Production of newsletter and handbook.
- Establish staff development plan.
- Establish plan for seeking financial and political support.

Comments

- The Northern Cambria County group was slow in forming largely due to unrealized turf issues that exist between the two cities located in this region, Johnstown and Ebensburg. Although these two cities share services, there is a struggle for ownership. The BCL group began in Ebensburg and found it difficult to involve Johnstown-based stakeholders. Group meetings were not well-attended and the core planning group became very frustrated. It soon became apparent that the problem was the location of group meetings and the Ebensburg-based leadership.
- The group is now meeting in Johnstown and has a shared leadership that involves both cities. Leonard Shurin, Johnstown Vo-Tech School, is working as a co-facilitator with Lee Burket, Admiral Perry Vo-Tech School (Ebensburg).
- Membership has increased dramatically—from 4 to 17 agencies. This has taken time, but the group is finally off to a good start. In fact, the group has been successful in bringing together two cities that have a history of not working well together.
- The group's constituency is continuing to increase as the momentum of the group builds.

Chapter Nine

Pittsburgh Neighborhood Learning Collaborative

(1996-97 Community-Based Planning Group)

Group Mission

- To make literacy services accessible and comfortable for the client.
- To make information about literacy services easily available to community groups and potential clients.

Group Goals

- To gather complete information about literacy/adult basic education/GED/ programs that are currently underway in Pittsburgh.
- To gather information about current and emerging literacy needs of the community and make recommendations to meet program needs.
- To make recommendations of how business and industry can have a method of communicating their needs to the literacy providers.

Membership

- Goodwill Industries (Education Director and VP Human Services)
- Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council (Executive Director)
- Magee Women's Hospital (Education Director)
- Giant Eagle (Director of Human Resources)
- Sawyer School (Director of Academic Development)
- Forbes Fund (Executive Director)
- Custom Conference Development
- University of Pittsburgh
- Allegheny County Assistance Office (Executive Director)
- Bidwell Training Center
- Pittsburgh Partnership (Assistant Director)

• Carlow College (Literacy Specialist)

Accomplishments to Date

1. The group includes representatives of a wide range of Pittsburgh literacy providers, social services providers, businesses, and government agencies.

• New members are becoming involved.

2. The group conducted a survey of local literacy services of Pittsburgh agencies, including: (1) names, addresses, phone numbers, and contact people of agencies, (2) types of services offered, (3) times services are offered, (4) clients served, and (5) other relevant information about services.

• The resulting document provided new information about and new insight into the quantity and variety of literacy services.

• The group is using this information to determine gaps in services.

Next Steps

1. Identifying how referrals are currently being made.

2. Anticipating emerging literacy needs as a result of new legislation.

3. Discussing and planning efficient and effective services that are now needed and that will be needed in the future.

4. Preparing an easily-referenced document for use by referring agencies.

• For example, a reference guide for a social services worker to refer a client to the most appropriate literacy/adult basic education program.

Self-Assessment of Collaboration Process (Coalition Evaluation Instrument results)
Each group did a self-assessment and rated itself from 1 (low) to 5 (high) on each of 9 statements.

1. The degree to which goals have been defined and are understood and shared by group members.

Group rating = 5

2. Level of commitment group members have toward goals.

Group rating = 5

3. Definition of group outcomes that can be achieved by working together.

Group rating = 5

4. Effectiveness of leadership in moving the group toward the attainment of goals.

Group rating = 4

5. Commitment of members to working together to attain goals.

Group rating = 5

6. Level of communication among group members.

Group rating = 4

7. Level of openness and trust among group members.

Group rating = 5

8. Level of conflict resolution among group members.

Group rating = 5

9. Diversity of group membership.

Group rating = 4

• Group membership includes literacy providers, social services, business, and other educators but the group is still recruiting members.

Impact Measures

Pittsburgh identified desired outcomes in the four designated areas (adult learning, services development, system development, and resource development) to measure the impact of collaboration and community-based planning.

1. Adult learning

• Literacy services will be easily accessible and comfortable for clients.

2. Services development

• To fill in gaps in services including locations, times, and serving the individual needs of clients.

3. Systems development

- Information about literacy services will be easily available to counselors, community groups, and potential clients.

4. Resource development

- New information about and greater insight into the quantity, quality, and variety of literacy services.

Comments

- The Pittsburgh community-based planning group is moving forward at a cautious, but steady, pace.
- Turf issues have been put aside and groups are working well together.
- Communication among group members is positive and increasing.
- Group members are very pleased with the degree of collaboration they have been able to accomplish thus far and the direction the group has taken.

Comments

- Washington County has come a long way. Prior to their involvement in this project, the Washington Literacy Council had never applied for state or federal funding and had always served their learners through the volunteer efforts of tutors and with the little bit of money they raised locally. When they realized the needs of their clients were changing, they feared they would not be able to meet those needs as effectively as they had in the past and decided it was time to take action. They applied for a BCL community-based planning grant to guide and support them in their efforts to develop community-wide collaboration—so they could learn about the adult education services other agencies in the county were providing and, together, find a way to meet the needs of adult learners.
- It has taken time for them to identify the stakeholders in the county, but they are steadily building their constituency.
- At the same time, they have been trying to replace traditional adult literacy practices with new ways of thinking about adult learning.
- They are committed to developing a comprehensive delivery system of services that will effectively and efficiently serve the multiple needs of adult learners.

Chapter Eleven

Procedures for Dissemination

The BCL Final Report, Guidebook for Community-Based Planning, and Guidelines for Mentoring Communities will be available through the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy (PSCAL), the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, AdvancE Clearinghouse and Resource Center, and the Western Pennsylvania Literacy Resource Center.

BCL community-based planning groups are represented on the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy and the Adult Basic and Literacy Education Interagency Coordinating Council. The BCL community-based planning project is being studied by state-level initiatives as a model for interagency collaboration.

Articles about the BCL project have appeared in What's the Buzz? and general information about the project has been distributed at adult literacy conferences and PSCAL forums. A PSCAL forum is being planned for spring 1998 featuring the BCL community-based planning groups. The project is also featured on the PSCAL web page—http://www.pcta.com/literacy.

Four new BCL community-based planning sites will be added to the project during 1997-98 through a competitive Request for Proposals process. Announcements of availability of funds and applications for funding have been distributed through adult basic and literacy education, public assistance, human resource, family literacy, public library, economic development, and community-based organization networks.

conclusions and recommendations are lessons learned by New Futures as they apply to the BCL community-based planning project.

Communities are at different stages of readiness for collaboration and community-based planning.

1. Communities that have a history of cooperation are better prepared for collaboration and community-based planning.

• The seven BCL sites varied in their degree of readiness upon entry into the BCL community-based planning project.

• Each of the three BCL pilot sites had a history of coordination among local agencies that served as a springboard for community-based planning.

• The four 1996-97 sites did not have the same experience to build on and, consequently, had to increase community and stakeholder awareness of the need for coordination, collaboration, and community-based planning.

2. Communities that have a history of turf issues or that have little or no awareness or understanding of local programs and services must spend time developing trust and awareness among members before collaborative partnerships can be established.

• Several BCL groups recognized a subtle resistance on the part of some members to share information, although this decreased as trust among members increased.

• In two communities, a history of turf issues was a factor and presented a challenge in bringing together stakeholders. Slowly, but surely, stakeholders who previously had not been willing to sit at the same table, came together and began to discuss common concerns.

3. Communities with a history of isolation of services and agencies from one another often have communication gaps and lack the experience to communicate across sectors.

• Upon entry into the project, almost all BCL communities reported a lack of

awareness of and information about many of the services available in their communities.

- BCL groups had to spend time learning about existing community agencies and the services they offer.

Forming a collaborative constituency takes time.

1. Identifying and bringing together key stakeholders to form groups committed to long-term efforts requires time.

- Several BCL core planning groups were not aware of all the agencies and programs in their communities serving adult learners and spent time identifying stakeholders.

2. Decision making or goal setting that does not involve key stakeholders can compromise the success of the group and collaborative efforts.

- BCL groups realized the importance of including all perspectives and insights in group decisions and goals and, consequently, time was spent establishing constituencies before group decisions and goals were firmly set.

3. Diversity of stakeholder perspectives, language, style, and interests must be addressed and a common understanding must be accepted by all members.

- BCL groups worked to develop a common understanding among members. This was particularly challenging due to the diversity of stakeholders involved.

4. Lack of information and direct experience requires time spent increasing awareness and understanding.

- Because many of the BCL groups involved stakeholders who knew little or nothing about other agencies in the community, considerable amounts of time were spent increasing members' awareness of community services.

5. Time must be spent conducting assessments of current conditions, prioritizing

needs, setting goals, and developing strategic plans.

- In order to identify gaps or duplications in existing services, BCL groups spent time developing and conducting needs assessments and/or reviewing the results of assessments that had been conducted by other groups in the community. Most groups did this while their constituencies were building. Needs assessments often identified key stakeholders and, as members joined the group, new services were identified.
- Group goals became more focused as group constituencies grew and became better informed about existing conditions.
- Most groups started out with a small core of members who were actively involved and a larger group of members who were interested but not really contributing toward attainment of group goals. All groups have increased the number of active members, but are still striving to get all members fully engaged in collaborative efforts.

External support is a critical factor in the establishment of community-based planning groups.

- The Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy provided the external support for the BCL project with Adult Education Act funding through the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education.
- The Program Coordinator and Mentoring Communities provided ongoing training, technical assistance, guidance, and support using the following New Futures guidelines.

1. External support should be a catalyst and promote local buy-in, commitment, leadership, and ownership.
2. External support should provide ideas, expertise, funding, encouragement, and

technical assistance upon request.

3. External support should not take control or become an obstacle to local ownership.

4. External support should be present and heavily involved, sharing information and offering ongoing guidance and technical assistance.

5. External support initiates the development of the group, establishes its legitimacy, provides credibility, and encourages and helps maintain active participation.

6. External support can provide a neutral or third party entity when turf issues are a factor.

7. External support can help groups overcome logistical barriers.

In Summary

The BCL community-based planning project is producing very positive results in all seven sites. All groups have remained active—the three pilot sites are entering their third year. Benefits of collaboration were recognized immediately in all BCL sites. It was amazing, and alarming, how little most agencies knew about other programs in their communities. It was also painfully clear that adult learners had been confronted with a tangle of services that had little or no connection to other related services. All groups are enthusiastic and motivated. Their focus is on meeting the current and emerging needs of adult learners. They have met challenges and obstacles with determination and, consequently, have experienced success and made significant progress toward attaining their goals.

References and Resources

Annie E. Casey Foundation. *The Path of Most Resistance: Reflections on Lessons Learned from New Futures.*

Applebee, G. (1993). *Building Successful Coalitions.* Cornell Cooperative Extension.

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Appendix A

Profiles of BCL Community-Based Planning Pilot Sites

Fayette County Literacy Coalition

(1995-96 Pilot Site and Mentoring Community)

Group Mission

To provide coordinated and comprehensive educational services to undereducated adults of Fayette County through a one-stop information center for adult education.

Goals Attained During Year One

1. To develop coordinated and noncompetitive plans that can contribute to and receive support from the Fayette Business-Education Consortium and other economic development agencies.

• Outcome: The Adult Education Coalition is a sub-committee of the School-to-Work Program.

2. To develop a common data base and identify service gaps and redundancies.

• Outcome: Documented current agencies and collaborations, proposals for the future, and possible collaborative efforts for the future.

3. To identify staff development needs and work towards a common program to meet those needs.

• Outcome: A staff development program was held and addressed PDE quality indicators, welfare reform, student files, and program updates.

4. To develop linkages among education programs and describe these in the media to begin the process of establishing a "community presence" for the coalition.

• Outcome: Speakers presented information on the coalition to the following groups: Business and Education Consortium, Human Service Council, Fayette Literacy Council, and School-to-Work Partnership.

Long-Term Goals

- To upgrade and expand services.
- To involve business leaders as mentors to and employers of adult learners.
- To develop a structured media campaign to create awareness and recruit participation.

Membership

- Community Action
- Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Development Council
- Penn State Fayette Campus

- Fayette Literacy Council
- Cities and Schools
- Private Industry Council
- Intermediate Unit #1
- YMCA
- WVA Career Institute

Accomplishments to Date

1. Sharing of student data intake forms, IEPs, and program booklets.

• All members have agreed to share transcripts upon transferring from one program to another to avoid duplication of paperwork.

2. Referral system among adult education providers.

• Since the group has been meeting, agencies have been receiving more referrals from the Adult Learning Center, Penn State, the Private Industry Council, and Community Action.

3. Nonduplication of services.

• Coordinated dates for GED testing.

4. A coordinated Job Fair with Community Action and Private Industry Council.
5. Staff development program.
6. Taxi transportation at a reasonable cost for adult learners.
7. Agencies have been coordinating and collaborating with each other to bring new programs to Fayette County.
8. A resource directory of adult literacy programs.

Lycoming County

(1995-96 Pilot Site and Mentoring Community)

Group Mission

To coordinate and collaborate efforts to provide more comprehensive services to adult learners in Lycoming County and to coordinate with other community planning groups to further mutual efforts and enhance learning and workforce development.

Group Goals

- To develop a common base of adult services in Lycoming County.
- To promote program coordination to ensure that programs center on customer needs and the provision of appropriate services.
- To avoid unnecessary duplication of effort among service providers.
- To develop and implement a systematic recruitment effort targeted at unserved and underserved customers.
- To develop and implement coordination mechanisms with other existing partnerships in Lycoming County.
- To increase business involvement.
- To seek funding on a collaborative process.

Membership

- Lycoming-Clinton Counties Commission for Community Action (STEP, Inc)
- Lycoming County Literacy Project
- Williamsport Area School District
- Pennsylvania College of Technology
- Lycoming County Assistance Office
- Lycoming County Career Consortium
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Lycoming County Planning Commission
- Lycoming County Prison System
- City of Williamsport
- Lycoming County Children and Youth
- Lycoming-Clinton Head Start

Accomplishments to Date

- Development of a community brochure.
- Membership in the Lycoming County School-to-Work Partnership.
- Community-based planning has strengthened the referral process among programs.
- Cooperative efforts to provide training to business and industry.
- Cooperative efforts among group members have resulted in the group writing and submitting of two proposals for funding.

Next Step

- To review and evaluate current processes to identify how the group can most effectively fit into the Lycoming County workforce development planning effort.

Wyoming Valley

(1995-96 Pilot Site and Mentoring Community)

Group Mission

To act as a clearinghouse for literacy information; to publicize literacy events; to share questions, concerns, and experiences for literacy advancement; and to work as a collective organization for reporting and documenting Wyoming Valley literacy needs.

Group Goals

- To increase media coverage.
- To engage more business involvement.

Membership

- Act I Inc.
- ALTA Institute Luzerne County Community College
- Catholic Social Services
- Catholic Youth Center
- Citizen's Voice
- Community Counseling Services
- Deutsch Institute
- Developing Communities for Success
- Educational Opportunity Center
- Educational Success for Homeless Children
- Family Action Network
- The Greenhouse Center
- Head Start
- Homework Club, Exeter Housing
- Jewish Family Service
- JTPA Program
- King's Volunteer Services
- Luzerne County Assistance Office
- Luzerne County Correctional Facility
- Luzerne County Housing Authority
- Luzerne County Reading Council
- Luzerne Intermediate Unit # 18

- McGlynn Learning Center
- Mercy Services
- MIED Tutorial Center
- Mineral Springs
- Osterhout Free Library
- Penn State Cooperative Extension
- RSVP of Luzerne County
- Salvation Army
- SPOC
- The Times Leader
- Volunteer Action Center
- Volunteers of America
- Wilkes-Barre Area School District
- Wilkes-Barre Housing Authority
- Wilkes University Literacy Corps
- Wilkes Student Community Service Center
- WVIA-TV
- Wyoming Valley Job Center
- Wyoming Valley Literacy Volunteers
- YMCA

Accomplishments to Date

1. A directory of programs and agencies including complete descriptions of services has been produced and updated.
2. A poster contest to be used for public relations purposes.
3. Wilkes University is willing to help set up radio spots for literacy.

Next Step

- A media blitz publicizing a number to call for literacy information.

Appendix B

Evaluation Instruments

Impact Measures

(adapted from Bergstrom, et al, 1995)

Impact Measures:

1. Are specific measures related to any outcome.
2. Articulate growth, accomplishments, and/or achievements toward attaining outcomes.

There are four categories of community-based planning Impact Measures:

1. **Adult Learner Impact:** Learning accomplishments of adult learners (including knowledge of and participation in services) as a result of collaboration among service providers and community-based planning efforts.

2. **Services Development:** Changes occurring <u>within</u> groups, agencies, and organizations as a result of collaboration and community-based planning efforts.

3. **Systems Development:** Changes occurring in <u>how individuals, groups, agencies, and organizations work together</u> toward a shared vision and common goals.

4. **Resource Development:** A range of resources including time, skills, money, and people identified, accessed, and/or realigned to focus on the attainment of a shared vision and common goals.

Please complete the following in terms of (1) the needs of your community, (2) the goals of your community-based planning efforts, and (3) collaboration among adult literacy stakeholders in your group:

1. List the desired outcomes for <u>each</u> of the above Impact Measures.
2. Explain how the desired outcomes were addressed in the mission and goals of your community-based planning group.
3. Assess and describe progress made toward attaining the desired outcomes.
4. Describe any problems you had in making progress in Impact Measure categories.
5. Describe any changes in desired outcomes and list current and future goals as they relate to desired outcomes.

Coalition Evaluation Instrument
(Applebee, 1993)

Describe your group by circling the appropriate number and making additional comments or describing plans for action.

1. Goals: Common goals have been defined and are understood and shared by all members.

A. Rate the degree to which goals have been defined and are understood.

Low High
1 2 3 4 5

Describe growth in this area and plans for the future.

B. Rate the level of commitment group members have toward goals.

Low High
1 2 3 4 5

Describe growth in this area and plans for the future.

2. Outcomes: Outcomes that can be achieved by working together have been identified.

A. Rate the awareness level of group members in regard to outcomes.

Low High
1 2 3 4 5

Describe growth in this area and plans for the future.

3. Leadership: Leadership is moving the group toward goals in a timely manner.

A. Rate group leadership.

Low High
1 2 3 4 5

Describe growth in this area and plans for the future.

4. Commitment: Members are committed to working together to achieve established goals.

A. Rate the commitment of group members.

Low High
1 2 3 4 5

Describe growth in this area and plans for the future.

5. Communication: Systems of communication have been established among groups.

A. Rate the level of effective communication among groups.

Low High
1 2 3 4 5

Describe growth in this area and plans for the future.

6. Turf: The group is aware of and respects each member's area of concentration and commitment.

A. Rate the level of openness among group members.

Low High
1 2 3 4 5

Describe growth in this area and plans for the future.

B. Rate the level of resolution regarding turf concerns in the group.

Low High
1 2 3 4 5

Describe growth in this area and plans for the future.

7. Diverse Representation: The group includes a diverse representation of stakeholders sharing an interest in and commitment to adult learning.

A. Rate the level of diversity in the group.

Low High
1 2 3 4 5

Describe growth in this area and plans for the future.

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Building Communities for Learning

Guidelines for Mentoring Communities

Product

Prepared by
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Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy

1996-97

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Federal Amount: $20,000
Project No. 98-7007

The activity which is the subject of this report was supported in part by the U. S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U. S. Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement by these agencies should be inferred.

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Building Communities for Learning

Abstract

Purpose of the BCL Project: To encourage and assist communities in the development of community-based planning groups for the purpose of improving the delivery of services for adult learners and, ultimately, maximizing adult learning outcomes.

Audience: The audience for the BCL community-based planning includes, but is not limited to, adult learners, adult basic and literacy education providers, K-12 and other education providers, job training centers and programs, business and industry, public assistance and human resource services, local government, community economic development groups, and community health services.

Project Objectives: All objectives were met with the exception of recruiting nonfunded applicants as project participants.

- Four communities received BCL community-based planning start-up grants.
- The three BCL pilot sites assumed a new role as Mentoring Communities and provided new sites with field-driven training, technical assistance, and support.
- All BCL groups received training, and technical assistance.

Project Impact: BCL sites have already reported increased awareness of adult basic and literacy education programs and their services; increased public awareness of adult learning issues, needs, and achievements; improved communication among adult education stakeholders; smoother client transitions between programs; better client referrals among programs; and coordinated paperwork and reporting among programs and agencies.

Conclusions: There is a great need for community-wide collaboration and community-based planning to improve services for adult learners and, ultimately, adult learning outcomes.

1. Regardless of the size, location, or demographics of the community, local stakeholders were not fully aware of the types of programs and services offered to adult learners in their community.
2. Communities need to increase awareness of adult learning services, needs, and issues.
3. Active involvement of business and industry in community-based planning efforts was recognized as a priority, but remains a challenge for most groups.
4. Collaboration and community-based planning require time, training, knowledge, skills, and commitment.
5. Communities need training and technical assistance to guide the collaboration and community-based planning processes.
6. External support is needed for legitimacy and credibility, start-up funding, training and technical assistance, and ongoing guidance.

Introduction

Purpose and Objectives

The Building Communities for Learning (BCL) community-based planning project proposed to address the need for collaboration among adult learning stakeholders to improve the delivery of adult learner services and, ultimately, maximize adult learning outcomes. Although the need for collaboration within a community is well-documented, partnerships are often difficult to establish and maintain. Those attempting to develop partnerships often fail to understand what constitutes collaboration and there has been little direction on how to approach community-based planning for adult literacy services. In response, the BCL project developed a community-based planning model to support its overall objective to provide communities with start-up funding, training, and technical assistance including field-driven mentoring.

Project Background

Communities must collaborate to develop strategic plans to prepare for the changing characteristics, issues, and conditions that currently and will, in the future, challenge the provision of high-quality, comprehensive adult education services. In response, in 1994, the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy (PSCAL) coordinated a task force, representing a diverse group of adult literacy stakeholders, to explore and plan the implementation of a statewide project designed to initiate and guide the establishment of community-based planning groups. Three sites were involved in the BCL pilot project (Fayette County, Lycoming County, and Wyoming Valley). BCL pilot sites received training and technical assistance to guide and support collaboration and community-based planning efforts targeting the improvement of services to adult learners. The pilot sites remain active as community-based planning groups and assumed new roles as Mentoring

Communities during 1996-97.

Time Frame

During July through October 1996, a competitive Request for Proposals process was developed and conducted. The BCL project awarded four locales with start-up grants for the purpose of establishing community-based planning groups: Carbon County. Northern Cambria County, Pittsburgh, and Washington County. Simultaneously, the three BCL 1995-96 pilot sites assumed a new role as Mentoring Communities. Each new community was provided with training and technical assistance; three of the four groups were matched with a BCL Mentoring Community. The progress of the groups, in terms of establishing collaboration among local stakeholders and attaining local group goals, was monitored and evaluated over the term of the project.

Key Personnel

Sheila Sherow coordinated the BCL project for PSCAL. The Center for Literacy was the grantee as it serves as the fiscal agent for PSCAL. Members of PSCAL served as the advisory group for the BCL project, assisted with the RFP process, and disseminated information about the project. Seven communities were involved as BCL sites: Fayette County, Lycoming County, Wyoming Valley, Carbon County, Northern Cambria County, Pittsburgh, and Wyoming Valley. Representatives from each of the pilot sites served as mentors: Kim Hawk (Fayette County) Dan Merk (Lycoming County), and Mary Martino (Wyoming Valley).

Audience

The audience for this project includes, but is not limited to, adult basic and literacy education providers and consumers; preschool, K - 12, and post-secondary education providers; job training programs; job centers and other job placement services; public assistance and other human resource agencies; community economic development agencies and other planning groups; local government

agencies; business and industry and business associations; and chambers of commerce.

Sources of Dissemination

The BCL Final Reports and training materials are available through the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy (Joanne Shane Plummer, 403 Herr St., Harrisburg, PA 17102), the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, AdvancE, and the Western Pennsylvania Literacy Resource Center.

Organization of BCL Final Report

The BCL Final Report includes twelve chapters that have been organized in a manner designed to present the project as clearly and comprehensively as possible.

- Chapter One describes the rationale for the project in terms of the need for community-wide collaboration and community-based planning to improve the delivery of services for adult learners and, ultimately, improve adult learning outcomes.
- Chapter Two presents the project's goals and objectives. The project's objectives are interrelated and, as such, are not described in separate chapters.
- Chapter Three describes the project's procedures.
- Chapter Four reports that all project objectives were met with the exception of involving nonfunded communities in the project.
- Chapter Five analyzes why the nonfunded communities declined the invitation to become involved in the project.
- Chapter Six describes the project's evaluation strategy, summarizes the project's outcomes, and reports the impact of Mentoring Communities.
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- Chapter Twelve reports project conclusions and makes recommendations.

BCL Training Materials

There are two BCL training publications.

- The BCL Guidebook for Community-Based Planning outlines basic strategies for community-wide collaboration and community-based planning.
- The Guide for Mentoring Communities describes the field-driven mentoring component of the BCL project and outlines basic mentoring techniques.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING
MENTORING GUIDELINES

By definition, a mentor is a wise and faithful counselor, a tutor, a guide, and a coach.

> In Homer's Odyssey, Mentor was entrusted with the education of Telemachus, the son of Odysseus. Mentor was half-God, half-man, half-male, and half-female.

The Building Communities for Learning (BCL) community-based planning project developed and implemented a field-driven training and technical assistance component during 1996-97—Mentoring Communities. Each of the three BCL pilot sites (Fayette County, Lycoming County, and Wyoming Valley) assumed the role of a Mentoring Community and was matched with a new BCL community-based planning site. Matches were made based on similarities between sites and geographical location.

Each Mentoring Community selected individual group members to be the primary mentoring contacts. Prior to their first mentoring meeting, these individuals were involved in a BCL sponsored two-day briefing and discussion about their roles as mentors to new BCL community-based planning groups. The BCL Program Coordinator arranged for the initial meetings between mentors and their mentoring partners. Subsequent contact was arranged and scheduled by the mentoring pairs.

The mentoring component of the BCL project was monitored by the Program Coordinator and evaluated by both partners of each mentoring group. The response was overwhelmingly positive. The new communities valued their mentors'

experience, expertise, knowledge, guidance, and support, and appreciated the underlying goal to help communities develop local ownership and independence. Mentors also found the experience to be very positive and beneficial—they gained insight, learned new ideas, and developed deeper understandings as they were introduced to new situations and perspectives. The field-driven mentoring component proved to be a very valuable source of technical assistance and support.

Responses from new communities when asked to comment on the effectiveness of the Mentoring Communities component of the project and, in particular, their BCL mentors included:

- Understands your needs and helps you find ways to obtain them.
- Makes suggestions, but doesn't demand that you follow them.
- Listens to your ideas, comments on them, and assists you in implementation.
- Gives you positive reinforcement.
- Uses past experiences to help you avoid pitfalls and prevent you from re-inventing the wheel.
- Gets to know the people you are working with.
- Realizes that your program is different and unique and can't be approached with a cookie cutter mentality.
- Shows you new ways to think about old programs.
- Has a knowledge base that he/she is willing to share.
- Has dealt with the struggles our group is experiencing and has helped us work through the issues.
- Has provided (1) knowledge, (2) experience, (3) willingness to assist, and (4) encouragement.
- Clarified our purpose, kept us on track, and gave us direction and suggestions.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A BCL MENTOR

- A DESIRE TO BETTER SERVE THE NEEDS OF ADULT LEARNERS.
- EXPERIENCE, EXPERTISE, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND A POSITIVE ATTITUDE RELATED TO COMMUNITY-WIDE COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING.
- A HISTORY OF SUCCESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.
- A DESIRE TO SHARE EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS.
- A DESIRE TO HELP—NOT DEVELOP.
- A DESIRE TO WELCOME NEW BCL COMMUNITIES.
- GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS.
- GOOD INTERPERSONAL SKILLS.
- PATIENCE AND ENTHUSIASM.
- GOOD CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS.
- AN UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF OTHER PERSPECTIVES AND ATTITUDES.

THE MULTIPLE ROLES OF A BCL MENTOR

A BCL MENTOR performs a variety of roles including, but not limited to:

COACH

- Helps group acquire or improve skills related to establishing community-wide collaboration and community-based planning.
- Helps group to understand and respect the varying perspectives and attitudes of key stakeholders.
- Provides encouragement, support, and guidance as the group's constituency builds and matures.
- Stays in the background and promotes local ownership.

FACILITATOR

- Helps things to happen within the group and towards attainment of group goals.
- Recognizes and alerts the group to potential obstacles and barriers.
- Prepares the group for action using BCL community-based planning strategies.

TEACHER

- Provides group members with training in skill areas related to attaining community-based planning goals.
- Encourages new ways of thinking, creativity, and innovation.
- Increases understanding of and among group members.
- Increases awareness and improves attitudes.
- Presents ideas, information, and alternatives.

COUNSELOR

- Helps group to work through problem solving and decision making processes.
- Helps group see issues more clearly.
- Helps group identify options and alternatives.
- Helps group prioritize.
- Listens and advises based on own experiences in community-based planning.

CONSULTANT

- Provides group with assistance as problems occur.
- Provides group members with informal training and technical assistance.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING COMMUNITIES

MENTORING:

- Is proven as an effective way of using external resources to acquire knowledge and skills.
- Reduces risk of failure.
- Allows new BCL community-based planning groups to benefit from the lessons learned by BCL pilot sites.
- Provides support on an as-needed basis.
- Helps with small as well as large problems, concerns, or issues.
- Can address and solve problems before they become critical.
- Reduces time spent duplicating the efforts of BCL pilot sites—eliminates re-inventing the wheel.

MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS:

- Are informal relationships that are non-threatening and non-intrusive.
- Create a productive learning environment.
- Are mutually beneficial for mentoring partners.

MENTORING PROVIDES MENTORS WITH:

- New insights.
- Opportunities to re-evaluate their own attitudes, beliefs, and priorities.
- Opportunities to update their own skills.
- New challenges.
- Increased self-esteem and motivation.
- Recognition as a valued colleague and professional.

GUIDELINES FOR BCL MENTORS

- DO NOT TAKE CONTROL—ENCOURAGE LOCAL OWNERSHIP.
- BE A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS GAINED FROM YOUR OWN COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING EXPERIENCE.
- ALLOW GROUPS TO IDENTIFY THEIR TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS.
- PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS AND ATTITUDES THAT HELP GROUPS BECOME INDEPENDENT AND REACH THEIR POTENTIAL.
- PROVIDE NEW BCL COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING GROUPS WITH REASONABLE AND SAFE CHALLENGES.
- PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT AS NEEDED AND REQUESTED BY NEW GROUPS.
- BE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS, QUESTIONS, AND REQUESTS OF NEW GROUPS.
- BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER.
- RESPECT, RECOGNIZE THE BENEFITS OF, AND BUILD ON DIVERSITY.
- RESPECT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY.

BUILDING A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Mentoring is a two-sided relationship in which both partners gain from the mentoring experience.

ESTABLISH INITIAL RAPPORT

1. Get to know each other.
2. Clarify common interests.
3. Identify shared goals.
4. Build mutual trust and respect.
5. Share expectations.

- Availability and accessibility of mentor.
- Amount and kind of support, technical assistance, etc.

6. Develop mentoring procedures.

- Frequency of contact, arrangements for meetings, etc.

DEVELOP A POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE LEARNING RELATIONSHIP

1. Share information.
2. Identify group challenges.
3. Identify group needs.
4. Discuss group goals.

TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

1. Jointly assess specific learning needs.
2. Jointly identify and prioritize specific learning goals.
3. Jointly decide upon a plan of action and develop a timeline.
4. Jointly evaluate progress made toward attainment of goals on a regular basis.

THE IMPACT OF MENTORING ON COMMUNITY-WIDE COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING

- BCL community-based planning sites matched with a Mentoring Community found the mentoring relationships to be extremely beneficial and supportive.
- BCL mentors were able to share their own experiences in establishing their groups and understood the challenges, and sometimes frustrations, of bringing diverse groups of stakeholders together.
- Mentors had a wealth of ideas and strategies that had proved to be effective, as well as some that had not worked as well as they had hoped. This, of course, was very helpful to newly forming groups.
- Mentors, in turn, found that they learned more about the process of collaboration and community-based planning through their affiliation with their mentoring partners. The new groups had many ideas that the Mentoring Communities had not thought of or tried out.

BCL MENTORS:

- Clarified the goals of the BCL project in terms of their own groups' goals and what they had been able to accomplish toward improving adult learner services and increasing adult learner outcomes.
- Helped their partners identify the types of agencies and programs most likely to be key stakeholders in adult learning.
- Suggested recruitment strategies that had been effective in engaging stakeholders in their own community-based planning groups.
- Encouraged groups to include a diverse representation of stakeholders.

- Served as sounding boards and, as such, helped new groups develop their missions and shared visions for the future.
- Assisted groups in identifying desired outcomes and setting goals.
- Shared their own groups' goals and, in so doing, helped new groups better understand the purpose of community-based planning and its potential.
- Shared their own experiences with turf issues and how they had been successful in building trust among group members.
- Offered suggestions and provided alternatives for group leadership and group procedures.
- Helped groups develop results-oriented agendas that would promote active participation, commitment, and the development of local ownership.
- Shared brochures and directories that had been developed by their groups to increase group and community awareness of the types and scope of local programs and services for adult learners.
- Helped groups identify and access local resources.
- Kept groups on track and focused.
- Were on-call for problem solving and helped groups brainstorm possible solutions to local problems that presented obstacles or barriers to collaboration and community-based planning.
- Provided ongoing encouragement and positive reinforcement.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR MENTORS

Mentors are a primary source of information and, as such, must be effective communicators.

COMMUNICATION INVOLVES:

- Nonverbal as well as verbal communication.
- Effective speaking.
- Active listening.
- Appropriate body language.

EFFECTIVE SPEAKING REQUIRES:

- Reporting information in a clear and organized manner.
- Repeating or summarizing information accurately.
- Describing situations or circumstances comprehensively, clearly, and accurately.
- Formulating questions to elicit needed information.

EFFECTIVE LISTENING REQUIRES:

- An accurate interpretation of the message.
- Correct interpretation of words spoken, tone of voice and inflection, and stress put upon particular words.
- Concentrating on what the speaker is saying rather than what you are planning to say in reply.
- Identifying main ideas, drawing conclusions, detecting problems, recognizing cause and effect, and understanding concepts and relationships.
- Asking questions and paraphrasing to ensure that the intended meaning is clear.
- Determining when a response is needed or desired.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS FOR MENTORS

MENTORS MUST BE ABLE TO:

- Sort and organize information provided by the group.
- Identify and access necessary information to determine adult learning needs.
- Analyze, compare, and prioritize data to help groups identify specific needs and set goals.
- Transfer information from one situation to another.
- Differentiate between fact and fiction, between fact and opinion.
- Understand the relationship between cause and effect.
- Understand and respect a variety of perspectives and attitudes.
- Understand the group dynamics of a diverse constituency.
- Think on their feet.
- Understand and practice group processes that provide all members with fair and equal opportunities to be heard.

MENTORS MUST UNDERSTAND AND BE ABLE TO USE AND TEACH THE FOLLOWING:

- Problem-solving skills.
- Decision-making skills.
- Brainstorming techniques.
- Conflict resolution skills.
- Negotiation techniques.
- Reaching a consensus.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Recognizing a problem exists is often the most difficult step in group problem solving.

1. It is often harder to figure out the problem than it is to figure out a solution.
    - What are the issues?
    - Determine what data is needed about feelings and events.
    - Examine the problem from many perspectives.
    - Construct and state a clear problem statement.

<u>Guidelines to problem solving include:</u>

1. Identifying who is involved.
    - What are the needs of those involved?
2. Brainstorming solutions.
    - Search for many varied solutions with interesting potentials.
3. Evaluating possible solutions.
    - The success of solutions to problems depends on and interacts with the conditions and circumstances in which the problems are presented.
4. Selecting the criteria to determine which solution is best.
5. Identifying those who resist specific solutions and why.
    - Which solution meets the most needs of everyone involved?
6. Reaching a consensus on a solution to try.
    - Which solution is acceptable to all those involved?
7. Establishing a plan of action and a timeline to carry out the solution.
    - Clearly identify WHO will do WHAT —WHERE and WHEN.
8. Evaluating the situation.

Solutions have consequences that matter.

1. Did the response and solution to the conflict deepen understanding and respect among those who were involved?
2. Did those involved feel valued by others and were some of their needs met?
3. Was the process cooperative or one of power?

If the solution failed to deepen understanding and respect, did not meet most of the needs of those involved, and was the result of power, not cooperation, start again:

1. Redefine the problem.
2. Brainstorm new solution alternatives.
3. Select a solution through consensus of the group.
4. Implement a plan of action and evaluate.

DECISION MAKING

Steps to effective decision making include:

Step One: The Question

1. Formulate a question that addresses the issue in the clearest way possible.
2. Make sure the right question has been asked.
3. Identify priorities for the question.

Step Two: The Alternatives

1. Gather information relevant to answering the question.
2. Create many alternative answers to the question.
3. List all possible options and consider all alternatives.

Step Three: The Consequences

1. Evaluate each of the alternatives.
2. Predict the likely outcomes and allow for contingency plans.

3. Consider all possible consequences.

Step Four: The Decision

1. Weigh the possibilities of succeeding with each alternative.
2. Measure the balance between risk and reward offered by each alternative.
3. Consider priorities in terms of alternatives.
4. Don't rush to a conclusion.
5. Consider personal feelings seriously.
6. Make the decision.
7. Recognize, accept, and commit to the decision.

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming enables a group to compile a list of possible problems, causes of problems, or solutions to problems.

Stage One

1. Assign one member of the group to record all ideas.
2. All group members should be encouraged to contribute ideas.
3. Do not evaluate or judge ideas at this time
4. Do not discuss ideas except briefly to clarify understanding.
5. Be creative—it is easier to eliminate than accumulate.
6. Repetition of ideas is okay—don't waste time sorting out duplications.
7. Encourage quantity; all ideas are welcome.
    - Don't worry if ideas seem impractical or impossible—they may lead to something else that works.
    - The more ideas the greater the likelihood of one that works.
8. Don't be too anxious to close out this stage.
    - When a plateau is reached, let things rest and then start again.

Stage Two

1. When all ideas are recorded, review all suggestions.
2. Combine identical ideas.
3. Consider all factors associated with each idea; determine pros and cons.
4. Identify any conditions or special circumstances needed for each idea.

Stage Three

1. Identify the ideas that meet the most needs of those involved.
2. Identify the ideas that are most feasible in terms of conditions and special circumstances.

Stage Four

1. Reach a consensus about which idea to implement.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Common causes of conflict within a group or between group members include:

1. Conflicts over resources:
    - Occur when two or more people want the same thing.
    - Typically are the easiest to identify and resolve.
    - The issue, the resource, is usually the focus of the conflict.
2. Conflicts over psychological needs:
    - Can involve power, friendships, belonging, and accomplishment.
    - Are more difficult to resolve because motivations are less obvious.
    - The real issue often fails to be resolved and conflicts often occur again.
3. Conflicts involving values:
    - Very personal conflicts involving individual belief systems.
    - Often difficult to resolve the real issue.
    - Resolution can mean a mutual acknowledgment of differences.

Conflict usually indicates that something needs to be changed.

- Winning means getting what you want or need.
- When winning becomes the focus, it is hard to reach a solution.

Win-Win	Everyone feels good because everyone wins and no one loses.
Win-Lose	Nothing good will result; promotes distrust and resentment.
Lose-Lose	No one is satisfied.

Approaches to conflict resolution include:

1. Avoidance
    - Many people choose to avoid conflict because they believe conflict is bad.
    - Avoidance can be in the form of denial which involves the repression of reactions and emotions.
    - People in denial may appear to unaffected by the conflict, but are usually left feeling resentful, hurt, or angry.
    - Denial can lead to further conflict because problems are not resolved.
    - Extreme denial can also result in thinking badly of ourselves.
    - Avoidance can also be expressed through accommodating behaviors.
    - Accommodating means agreeing rather than disagreeing because it is easier.
    - Accommodating behaviors include apologizing, finding reasons to justify a difference, or adjusting opinions or behaviors to bring them into alignment with someone else's.
    - The effectiveness of accommodating depends upon the seriousness or importance of the conflict.
2. Confrontation
    - Usually has a win-lose attitude about conflict.

- Determined to win by proving they are right.
- Can involve aggressive behavior.
- Is seldom effective because there is no real resolution.
- The use of power over the other person is a form of confrontation.

3. Problem solving
   - Conflict is viewed as natural and focuses on finding a solution that will be satisfactory to all parties.
   - Compromise is a common form of problem solving and involves each party giving up something, so that each partially wins and partially loses—can be effective if what is given up is not perceived as important.
   - Collaboration is a part of problem solving and involves finding a solution that meets both parties' needs—strives for a win-win situation.

Basic steps toward conflict resolution include:

1. Each party describing individual wants, needs, or concerns.
2. Each party describing individual feelings.
3. Each party carefully listening to and trying to understand the other party's wants, needs, or concerns.
4. Both parties jointly defining the specific problem.
5. Both parties considering all possible solutions.
6. Both parties working to find a mutually acceptable win/win solution to the problem.

Guidelines for healthy management of conflict include:

1. Clearly stating your needs or concerns.
2. Not arguing blindly.

3. Avoiding changing your mind just to agree.
4. Being assertive—not aggressive.
5. Not assuming that someone must win and someone must lose.
6. Keeping your focus on issues, not personalities.
7. Concentrating on problem solving and collaboration.
8. Trying for the most acceptable to everyone.
9. Avoiding prolonged two-way exchanges.
10. Using deliberate pauses for thought or to cool down.
11. Explaining differences and build on similarities.
12. Encouraging active listening—restating the previous person's ideas before presenting your own and avoiding interrupting discussion with "yes, but."

NEGOTIATION

Negotiating is back and forth communication designed to reach an agreement.

1. Negotiation is a process in which conflict is resolved without coercion or aggression.
2. Helps both parties state their individual needs.
3. Focuses on interests rather than positions.
4. Generates options for mutual gain.
5. Relies on effective communication skills.

Steps to negotiation include:

1. Stating the problem.
2. Stating what is wanted and why.
3. Evaluating options.
4. Creating win-win situations.
5. Creating an agreement.

REACHING A CONSENSUS

Reaching a consensus is resolving a problem or making a decision or taking a stand through compromise.

1. All members support it—no member may oppose it.

2. Consensus is not necessary an unanimous vote—it may not represent everyone's first choice.

3. Consensus is not a majority vote. In a majority vote only the majority get something they are happy with—the minority may get something they don't want at all.

RESOURCES

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AE 3025-1194B
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98-7007

Building Communities for Learning

Guidebook for Community-Based Planning

Product

Prepared by
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Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy

1996-97

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Federal Amount: $20,000
Project No. 98-7007

The activity which is the subject of this report was supported in part by the U. S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U. S. Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement by these agencies should be inferred.

Building Communities for Learning

Abstract

Purpose of the BCL Project: To encourage and assist communities in the development of community-based planning groups for the purpose of improving the delivery of services for adult learners and, ultimately, maximizing adult learning outcomes.

Audience: The audience for the BCL community-based planning includes, but is not limited to, adult learners, adult basic and literacy education providers, K-12 and other education providers, job training centers and programs, business and industry, public assistance and human resource services, local government, community economic development groups, and community health services.

Project Objectives: All objectives were met with the exception of recruiting nonfunded applicants as project participants.

- Four communities received BCL community-based planning start-up grants.
- The three BCL pilot sites assumed a new role as Mentoring Communities and provided new sites with field-driven training, technical assistance, and support.
- All BCL groups received training, and technical assistance.

Project Impact: BCL sites have already reported increased awareness of adult basic and literacy education programs and their services; increased public awareness of adult learning issues, needs, and achievements; improved communication among adult education stakeholders; smoother client transitions between programs; better client referrals among programs; and coordinated paperwork and reporting among programs and agencies.

Conclusions: There is a great need for community-wide collaboration and community-based planning to improve services for adult learners and, ultimately, adult learning outcomes.

1. Regardless of the size, location, or demographics of the community, local stakeholders were not fully aware of the types of programs and services offered to adult learners in their community.
2. Communities need to increase awareness of adult learning services, needs, and issues.
3. Active involvement of business and industry in community-based planning efforts was recognized as a priority, but remains a challenge for most groups.
4. Collaboration and community-based planning require time, training, knowledge, skills, and commitment.
5. Communities need training and technical assistance to guide the collaboration and community-based planning processes.
6. External support is needed for legitimacy and credibility, start-up funding, training and technical assistance, and ongoing guidance.

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Introduction

Purpose and Objectives

The Building Communities for Learning (BCL) community-based planning project proposed to address the need for collaboration among adult learning stakeholders to improve the delivery of adult learner services and, ultimately, maximize adult learning outcomes. Although the need for collaboration within a community is well-documented, partnerships are often difficult to establish and maintain. Those attempting to develop partnerships often fail to understand what constitutes collaboration and there has been little direction on how to approach community-based planning for adult literacy services. In response, the BCL project developed a community-based planning model to support its overall objective to provide communities with start-up funding, training, and technical assistance including field-driven mentoring.

Project Background

Communities must collaborate to develop strategic plans to prepare for the changing characteristics, issues, and conditions that currently and will, in the future, challenge the provision of high-quality, comprehensive adult education services. In response, in 1994, the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy (PSCAL) coordinated a task force, representing a diverse group of adult literacy stakeholders, to explore and plan the implementation of a statewide project designed to initiate and guide the establishment of community-based planning groups. Three sites were involved in the BCL pilot project (Fayette County, Lycoming County, and Wyoming Valley). BCL pilot sites received training and technical assistance to guide and support collaboration and community-based planning efforts targeting the improvement of services to adult learners. The pilot sites remain active as community-based planning groups and assumed new roles as Mentoring

Communities during 1996-97.

Time Frame

During July through October 1996, a competitive Request for Proposals process was developed and conducted. The BCL project awarded four locales with start-up grants for the purpose of establishing community-based planning groups: Carbon County. Northern Cambria County, Pittsburgh, and Washington County. Simultaneously, the three BCL 1995-96 pilot sites assumed a new role as Mentoring Communities. Each new community was provided with training and technical assistance; three of the four groups were matched with a BCL Mentoring Community. The progress of the groups, in terms of establishing collaboration among local stakeholders and attaining local group goals, was monitored and evaluated over the term of the project.

Key Personnel

Sheila Sherow coordinated the BCL project for PSCAL. The Center for Literacy was the grantee as it serves as the fiscal agent for PSCAL. Members of PSCAL served as the advisory group for the BCL project, assisted with the RFP process, and disseminated information about the project. Seven communities were involved as BCL sites: Fayette County, Lycoming County, Wyoming Valley, Carbon County, Northern Cambria County, Pittsburgh, and Wyoming Valley. Representatives from each of the pilot sites served as mentors: Kim Hawk (Fayette County) Dan Merk (Lycoming County), and Mary Martino (Wyoming Valley).

Audience

The audience for this project includes, but is not limited to, adult basic and literacy education providers and consumers; preschool, K - 12, and post-secondary education providers; job training programs; job centers and other job placement services; public assistance and other human resource agencies; community economic development agencies and other planning groups; local government

agencies; business and industry and business associations; and chambers of commerce.

Sources of Dissemination

The BCL Final Reports and training materials are available through the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy (Joanne Shane Plummer, 403 Herr St., Harrisburg, PA 17102), the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, AdvancE, and the Western Pennsylvania Literacy Resource Center.

Organization of BCL Final Report

The BCL Final Report includes twelve chapters that have been organized in a manner designed to present the project as clearly and comprehensively as possible.

- Chapter One describes the rationale for the project in terms of the need for community-wide collaboration and community-based planning to improve the delivery of services for adult learners and, ultimately, improve adult learning outcomes.
- Chapter Two presents the project's goals and objectives. The project's objectives are interrelated and, as such, are not described in separate chapters.
- Chapter Three describes the project's procedures.
- Chapter Four reports that all project objectives were met with the exception of involving nonfunded communities in the project.
- Chapter Five analyzes why the nonfunded communities declined the invitation to become involved in the project.
- Chapter Six describes the project's evaluation strategy, summarizes the project's outcomes, and reports the impact of Mentoring Communities.
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BCL Training Materials

There are two BCL training publications.

- The BCL Guidebook for Community-Based Planning outlines basic strategies for community-wide collaboration and community-based planning.
- The Guide for Mentoring Communities describes the field-driven mentoring component of the BCL project and outlines basic mentoring techniques.

ESTABLISHING COLLABORATION

Collaboration is the foundation of *Building Communities for Learning.*

• Understanding collaboration increases the likelihood of achieving the shared goals and desired outcomes of Building Communities for Learning (BCL) community-based planning groups.

• Collaboration is a process through which adult literacy stakeholders work together on the strengths of the community to develop coordinated systems of adult learners services with the goal to improve adult learning outcomes.

• Collaborative efforts bring together members of communities, agencies, and organizations in an environment of mutual respect and trust to systematically solve existing and emerging adult learner problems that cannot be solved by one group alone.

Collaboration can have a positive impact on:

• Adult learner outcomes.
• The delivery and effectiveness of adult learner services.
• Professional knowledge and expertise.
• The availability and use of local resources.

Collaboration is characterized by:

• Separate organizations forming a new structure with full commitment to a common mission.
• Members developing a group mission, shared vision, and goals.
• Members developing and implementing an action plan.
• Members pooling and jointly securing resources.
• Members contributing their own resources and expertise.
• Members sharing results and rewards.

Collaboration is a move from:

• Competing to coordinating.
• Working alone to including other stakeholders.
• Fragmenting services to coordinating services.
• Thinking mostly about activities, services, and programs to thinking about larger results and strategies—meeting current and emerging adult learner needs and maximizing adult learner outcomes.
• Accepting short-term accomplishments to striving to achieve long-term results.

Collaboration can result in more effective and efficient delivery of adult learner services through:

1. Cross-agency professional development opportunities that result in:
    • A sharing of concerns and ideas.

- Exposure to new methods and ideas.
- Increased awareness of available resources and how to obtain them.

2. More comprehensive and accurate needs assessments that better:
   - Identify existing adult learning needs.
   - Identify emerging adult learning needs.
   - Identify gaps in adult learner services.
   - Identify widespread adult learning problems.
3. Maximizing the use of local resources by:
   - Identifying needed resources.
   - Identifying available resources.
   - Combining and sharing resources.
   - Developing plans for the efficient use of resources.
   - Developing plans to jointly secure resources.
4. Rating and prioritizing current and emerging adult learning issues.
5. Elimination of duplication of adult learner services.
6. Increased and more effective use of adult learning programs.
7. Improved communication among groups, agencies, and organizations to improve consistency and reliability of information to clients, the community, community leaders, and policymakers.
   - To better serve needs of adult learners.
   - To increase use of existing adult learner programs and services.
   - To maximize use of local resources.
   - To increase awareness of adult learning issues.
   - To improve public image of the group and its mission.
   - To increase support, involvement, and commitment to the group and adult learning.
   - To make desired changes in legislation and funding.

Establishing a collaborative environment requires that group members:

- Know their organization's mission, goals, and investment in adult learning.
- Know their organization's interests and expectations from collaboration.
- Focus on communal benefits in terms of improving adult learner services and outcomes.
- Understand other members' power, commitment, and capabilities and what each brings to the group.

A collaborative group must:

1. Involve all stakeholders and key players in the community.
   - There must be a broad-based commitment to change.
   - Those who have the power and authority to negotiate change must be included.
   - Those whose lives will be affected by change must be included.
2. Establish a shared vision of better outcomes for adult learners.

3. Agree to disagree.
4. Develop a strategic plan to coordinate existing adult learner services.
    - To reflect current and emerging adult learning needs, issues, and priorities.
    - To reflect priorities of service providers, other stakeholders, and key policy makers.
    - Based on local needs.
    - Maximizing local resources.
5. Set attainable short and long-term goals.
6. Keep focused.
7. Build a shared leadership.

Common barriers to collaboration include:

- Turf issues, mistrust, and a history of little or no cooperation among agencies in the community.
- Limited resources or competition for resources.
- Poor communication or a lack of a common understanding.
- Lack of common goals or a common vision.
- Unquestioned acceptance of opinion as fact.
- Rush to accomplishment.
- Reluctant group members.

Questions to ask within an organization prior to collaboration:

1. How is our organization doing on its own?
    - Is the mission up-to-date?
    - Are we addressing current adult learning needs and prepared to address emerging needs?
    - Are we achieving our desired results in terms of adult learner outcomes?
    - Is communication among staff good?
    - Are staff receiving the professional development support they need?
    - Are we aware of other stakeholders and how their services relate to ours?
2. How well connected is our organization to other organizations?
    - How well connected are our staff to staff from other organizations?
    - How are client referrals and transitions?
3. Does our organization need to change?
    - How effective will we be if we continue to operate as we are?
    - Do we have limited resources?
    - Do we need to expand or develop more comprehensive services?
    - Do we need to deliver better outcomes for adult learners?

ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING GROUP

Questions to ask about the community prior to establishing a collaborative group:

1. What is the community's history of cooperation and collaboration?
2. Who are the stakeholders and key players?
3. How can we recruit members and encourage commitment and active involvement?
4. Who can provide leadership?
5. How are working relationships among group members?
6. Is there a willingness to share resources?

Successful community-based planning requires:

1. A diverse representation of stakeholders in adult learning.
    - Effective recruitment strategies.
2. Member participation and commitment.
    - A willingness to create and implement change.
3. A shared group leadership.
4. A common understanding, shared vision, and group mission.
5. Definition of desired outcomes.
6. Setting of community-based planning goals.
    - Prioritizing.
7. Strategic planning.
    - Developing action plans to involve all key players.
8. Identification and attainment of needed resources.
    - Human resources.
    - Financial resources.
    - Training and technical assistance resources.
    - Goods and support services resources.
9. Evaluation.
    - Ongoing assessment and re-assessment of progress made toward goal attainment.
10. Public relations and sustainability.
    - Effective media campaigns to increase awareness and elicit support.
    - Plans to maintain long-term collaborative efforts.

RECRUITING GROUP MEMBERS

Group membership must include a diverse representation of individuals, community members, and agencies.

• Group membership must involve people whose lives and services are and will be affected by decisions made by the group.

• Diversity brings a critical balance to collaboration and enhances the capacity for change through increased awareness and shifts in attitudes and beliefs about what is possible.

• All members must value and respect diversity within the group, in particular the uniqueness, expertise, skills, capacities, resources, ideas, concerns, expectations, and perspectives of each member.

Recruiting group members requires:

1. Identifying all stakeholders and key players in adult learning.
2. A strategy for selling potential members on the idea of collaborating to best serve adult learner issues.
3. Meeting with potential group members.
4. Focusing on how participation will enhance existing adult learner services and help service providers and other adult learner stakeholders reach their goals.
5. Being prepared to answer questions regarding the relationship of the group to:
    - Other community and state groups.
    - Current adult learning issues.
    - Future adult learning issues.
6. Being prepared to discuss:
    - How adult learner needs will be best served through collaborative efforts as opposed to individual stakeholder efforts.
    - The impact of collaboration on group member agencies and services.
    - The major decisions that must be made about the group mission and goals.
    - Resources.
7. Emphasizing the value of group networks as:
    - A means to acquire resources, build power, and get things done.
    - Tools to multiply power and efforts.

DEVELOPING A COMMON UNDERSTANDING, SHARED VISION, AND GROUP MISSION

A common understanding provides a foundation that binds members together and inspires commitment and action.

1. Requires building trust and group collaboration processes including problem solving, brainstorming, prioritizing, and reaching consensus.
2. Requires clarification of language usage and shared meanings of terminology which are acceptable to all group members.
3. Is an ongoing process of articulating common interests as they relate to the desired future (vision) and the purpose of community-based planning (mission) and involves knowledge of:
    - The community's residents, culture, values, and habits.
    - The community's vision for itself.
    - Community strengths and weaknesses.
    - Local resources.
    - Potential audiences and collaborators.
    - Potential turf battles.
    - Current and emerging adult learning issues and priorities.

A shared vision is the group's desired future in terms of adult learner services and outcomes.

- Brings members together to focus on achieving the group's mission.
- Leads the group to address needs while encouraging creative thinking in new directions.
- Gives direction to collaboration and offers greater potential for participation and commitment, maximizing resources, and developing sustainable outcomes.
- Encourages members to think about the sum of the parts.
- Considers past traditions and the community's history.
- Focuses on hopes for the future taking into consideration emerging needs and issues.
- Begins with the current situation and build towards the desired future.

There are two types of vision statements:

1. Broad-change vision statements that:
    - Mobilize interest and keep collaboration from focusing too narrowly.
    - Avoid mini-projects of marginal gain.
    - Take longer and are usually more difficult to accomplish.
2. Focused, short-term vision statements that:
    - Guide day-to-day activities.
    - Provide opportunities for short-term, concrete successes.
    - May not be inclusive enough to attract support from larger community.

Vision statements should include:

1. A description of what the group will accomplish—where and for whom.
2. Account of scope of work—how big, how many, how much.
3. Statement of unique purpose—must differ from missions of other groups.

Group missions define the purpose for creating change in:

- Thinking or knowledge.
- Attitudes or opinions.
- Feelings or emotions.
- Beliefs, values, or perceptions.
- Behaviors.

Change occurs over time in steps and begins with a realization that something needs to be changed.

1. The realization must be followed by a desire to change.
2. Options for change must be identified and understood.
3. Consequences of change must be understood.
4. The decision to change must be made.
5. The process of how to change must be understood.
6. The skills necessary for change must exist or be acquired.
7. Resources needed for change must be identified and available.
8. There must be a commitment to change.
9. Once change has been made it must be integrated into all levels of thinking and doing. 10. Implementing change takes time.

DEFINING DESIRED OUTCOMES

Desired outcomes are the anticipated results of collaboration and community-based planning.

1. Outcomes are often defined following the establishment of a shared vision and reflect success in working to reach that vision.
2. Outcomes do not include increasing specific services or building new programs—these are strategies or goals to attain the desired outcome of improving adult learning.
3. Outcomes must be clearly stated and understood so results can be identified when they occur.
4. Community-based planning groups that begin to define outcomes during the initial stages of building collaboration usually are more effective and tend to engage greater participation.

BCL community-based planning groups have two different sets of outcomes—process outcomes and product outcomes.

1. Process-oriented outcomes pertain to the establishment of collaboration and include:
    - Effective group process.
    - Effective communication among group members.
    - Effective and efficient strategic planning procedures.
2. There are two product-oriented desired outcomes:
    - The development or improvement of a coordinated delivery system of services for adult learners.
    - Increased adult learning gains.

SETTING COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING GOALS

Group goals are measurable steps toward the attainment of the shared vision and further define the purpose or mission of the community-based planning group.

1. Goals must be clearly understood and commonly accepted among all group members.
2. Goals can include both long and short-term objectives, must be measurable and achievable, and must support desired outcomes.
3. Group goals should be a blend of individual goals that will further the mission and shared vision of the group.
4. Goals must be win-win to allow for all members of the group to be successful.
5. Group goals are never 100 percent compatible with the goals of each member.
    - Members must be prepared to compromise.
6. Time should be spent clarifying goals to develop member commitment to them.
7. A consensus must be reached regarding goals.

TECHNIQUES FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

The best strategic plans require high-leverage action plans that:

- Capitalize on the community's strengths and build on opportunities.
- Focus more on proactive rather than reactive solutions.
- Solve multiple problems at once.
- Bring a return on investment and leverage other dollars.

Key Results Areas (KRAs)* are areas in which the group must achieve success in order to reach its goals.

1. Group goals and objectives can be grouped into KRAs, making it easier to prioritize objectives, allocate resources, and coordinate with other areas.
2. Once KRAs have been identified, goals and objectives can be identified within each KRA.

Effective strategic planning requires understanding positive and negative forces that either support or work against desired change.*

1. Identify forces working in favor of (positive) and against (negative) desired change.
   - Have members list both positive and negative forces related to each group goal.
2. Consider the impact of positive and negative forces.

Analysis of a group's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats can help guide the setting of goals and objectives while identifying needed and available resources.

1. Divide a flip chart page into four sections and label them: "Strengths," "Weaknesses," "Opportunities," and "Threats." (SWOTs)*
2. Ask every group member to identify SWOTs.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	**Threats**

* Policastro, M.L. Introduction to Strategic Planning. Management and Panning series. U.S. Small Business Administration. UNICOR Print Plant: Fort Worth, TX.

MEMBER PARTICIPATION AND COMMITMENT

Group meetings are complex and must have a single focus at any given time.

1. There is a tendency to go in many directions at once.
    - Meetings will not go anywhere until the group has focused on one problem for a period of time and puts all of its energy into investigating and solving it.
2. Group meetings should be characterized by:
    - Productivity.
    - Creativity.
    - Efficiency.
    - Active participation.
    - Full group commitment.

Members must be willing to participate regularly and actively in group meetings.

1. Each member must be perceived as important to the success of the group.
2. Members must have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
3. The group should be aware of members' levels of commitment and priority status for involvement in community-based planning efforts.
4. Each member should know what the group's expectations are and when results will begin to occur, thereby, encouraging continued participation.
    - A system for communication between meetings must be established.

Team building is the key to success and involves:

- Strong interpersonal skills.
- Setting group goals.
- Developing a plan of action.
- Shared leadership.
- Definition of roles and responsibilities.
- Delegating responsibilities.

When groups function effectively as teams, they:

- Can solve more complex problems.
- Make better decisions.
- Are more creative.
- Do more to build individual skills and commitment than individuals working alone.

Members of a team must:

1. Participate in setting of group goals.
2. Understand that team goals are best accomplished together.

3. Participate in making decisions.
4. Feel a sense of ownership for the group because they are committed to the group mission and the goals they helped set.
5. Contribute to the group's success by applying their unique talents and skills to group objectives.
6. Work in a climate of trust and feel free to express ideas, opinions, and feelings.
7. Practice open and honest communication and make an effort to understand each other.
8. Recognize conflict as normal and view conflict as an opportunity for new ideas and creativity.

Member commitment requires that:

- All members perceive the group as an entity in its own right.
- The group be regarded as having prestige.
- All members perceive the issues addressed are of importance.
- Group expectations be clear and understood by all members.
- All members perceive group goals as realistic.
- All members possess the knowledge needed by the group.
- All members have worthwhile tasks and feel appreciated by the group.
- All members receive credit for group success.

Group relationships must be recognized and strengthened to build the infrastructure of the group.

- Building relationships among members is fundamental to commitment and, ultimately, group success.
- Effective collaborations are characterized by win-win relationships among members.
- Interaction among members must be based on equality—no one exercising much authority over anyone else.
- Members must not be jealous of or competitive with other members.
- Members must feel a sense of connectedness to other members—must feel a linkage or bond with other members.

Turf issues can be a barrier to collaboration.

- "Turf issues" is a term borrowed from street gang terminology—every gang has its neighborhood or turf in which it operates and defends.
- Each organization has its own domain or field of operation and its own resources, goals, and tasks.
- When agencies collaborate they agree to share or exchange resources which, in turn, creates an overlap of domains.
- This overlap sometimes causes groups to be reluctant to collaborate as they fear that they are surrendering power over the control and management of their resources.

Turf battles and conflicts most often happen when:

1. There is general mistrust or lack of understanding among agencies.
2. One group perceives another to be in direct competition for resources.
3. One group fears that the costs of collaboration will be less than the rewards or benefits.
4. One group fears that another group will gain more.
5. One group is not flexible to compromise.
6. Collaboration is perceived as creating duplication of services.
7. Collaboration is perceived as changing an agency's identity or public image.
8. There are staff personality problems between agencies.
9. One agency feels ownership over a particular activity, service, etc.

• The higher the sense of commitment to the shared vision—the higher the probability that turf issues will not occur.

• All organizations must feel they will gain by working together and all must have access to equal power or control over resources.

Team Rating Checklist

How would you rate your group as a team on a scale from 1 to 5 (1= low; 5= high)?

Purpose

1. Members can describe and are committed to a common purpose.
2. Goals are clear, challenging, and relevant to the purpose.
3. Strategies for achieving goals are clear.
4. Individual roles are clear.

Empowerment, Relationships, and Communication

5. Members feel a personal and collective sense of power.
6. Members have access to necessary skills and resources.
7. Policies and practices support team objectives.
8. Mutual respect and willingness to help each other are evident.
9. Members express themselves openly and honestly.
10. Warmth, understanding, and acceptance are expressed.
11. Members listen actively to each other.
12. Difference of opinion and perspectives are valued.

Flexibility and Optimal Productivity

13. Members perform different roles and functions as needed.
14. Members share responsibility for team leadership and development.
15. Members are adaptable to changing demands.
16. Various ideas and approaches are explored.
17. Output is high.
18. Quality is excellent.
19. Decision making is effective.
20. Clear problem-solving process is apparent.

Recognition, Appreciation, and Morale

21. Individual contributions are recognized and appreciated.
22. Team accomplishments are recognized.
23. Group members feel respected.
24. Team contributions are recognized and valued.
25. Individuals feel good about their membership on the team.
26. Individuals are confident and motivated.
27. Members have a sense of pride and satisfaction about their work.
28. There is a strong sense of cohesion and team spirit.

Blanchard, K., Carew, D., & Parisi-Carew, E. (1990). The One Minute Manager Builds High Performing Teams. New York: William Morrow.

A SHARED GROUP LEADERSHIP

- A designated lead agency should be appointed while a shared leadership is maintained.
- The major responsibility of leadership must be the movement of the group toward the attainment of established goals in a timely manner.
- Leadership within the group should be viewed as those who have a positive impact toward change.

Role of leadership is:

1. To establish format for conducting meetings and norm of operation including the development of an agenda, protocol, conflict resolution procedures, structure, and definition of roles and responsibilities.
2. To initiate new ideas, goals, procedures.
3. To keep the group process and goal-oriented.
4. To keep group on topic in a timely manner.
5. To encourage all to have input, especially encourage silent members.
6. To help members think in new ways.
7. To clarify what others have said.
8. To help tie various comments together.
9. To explain relationships between facts, ideas, and suggestions from members.
10. To prevent one member from dominating the discussion.
11. To halt side conversations.
12. To be sure everyone is aware a decision is being reached.
13. To discuss controversial issues thoroughly, rather than pushing things through.
14. To attempt to reach consensus.
15. To make sure members perceive themselves as an important part of the whole.
16. To support members with praise and agreement.
17. To mediate differences.
18. To relieve anxiety of members.
19. To avoid competitiveness.
20. To avoid hidden agendas.
21. To avoid cynicism.
22. To promote conflict resolution.
23. To delegate responsibilities.
24. To facilitate and support team building.
25. To capitalize on individual and group strengths.

Effective group leaders:

1. Maintain group agreements.
2. Facilitate group interaction, problem identification, and problem solving.
3. Help everyone fit into the group.
4. Are friendly and welcoming to group members and make eye contact.
5. Introduce new group members to each other.
6. Convey that all group members are valued.
7. Acknowledge feelings and provide support.
8. Avoid putting anyone on the spot.
9. Ensure that everyone participates.
10. Keep the group interesting and active-motivate the group.
11. Respect all members of the group.
12. Are well organized and respectful of group members' time.
13. Respond to what is being said with clarifying statements.
14. Are aware of their body language, tone of voice, and vocabulary.
15. Avoid taking control and support group members' efforts to build solutions.

GROUP PROCESS

Basic ground rules for group discussions include:

1. Establish rules of confidentiality among group members.
2. Agree to treat all group members the same—not to treat some differently.
3. Agree not to make fun of, minimize, attack, blame, or ridicule other members of the group.
4. Agree that every group member has the right not to talk when they don't want to.
5. Agree that everyone has a chance to say what they want without having it debated, attacked, or agreed with or supported. Each statement gets to stand on its own without being taken over by someone else.
6. Agree that all group members will respect and allow expression of feelings.
7. Agree that everyone in the group will listen to others and will expect others to listen to them. This means that one person will talk at a time.
8. Agree that group members will speak for themselves using the word "I", thereby avoiding misinformation coming from using the words "we, you, or they."
9. Agree that everyone will take care of their own needs as much as possible.

Recognizing a problem exists is often the most difficult step in group problem solving.

1. It is often harder to figure out the problem than it is to figure out a solution.
    - What are the issues?
    - Determine what data is needed about feelings and events.
    - Examine the problem from many perspectives.
    - Construct and state a clear problem statement.

Guidelines to problem solving include:

1. Identifying who is involved.
    - What are the needs of those involved?
2. Brainstorming solutions.
    - Search for many varied solutions with interesting potentials.
3. Evaluating possible solutions.
    - The success of solutions to problems depends on and interacts with the conditions and circumstances in which the problems are presented.
4. Selecting the criteria to determine which solution is best.
5. Identifying those who resist specific solutions and why.
    - Which solution meets the most needs of everyone involved?
6. Reaching a consensus on a solution to try.
    - Which solution is acceptable to all those involved?

Brainstorming enables a group to compile a list of possible problems, causes of problems, or solutions to problems.

Stage One

1. Assign one member of the group to record all ideas.
2. All group members should be encouraged to contribute ideas.
3. Do not evaluate or judge ideas at this time.
4. Do not discuss ideas except briefly to clarify understanding.
5. Be creative—it is easier to eliminate than accumulate.
6. Repetition of ideas is okay—don't waste time sorting out duplications.
7. Encourage quantity; all ideas are welcome.
    - Don't worry if ideas seem impractical or impossible—they may lead to something else that works.
    - The more ideas the greater the likelihood of one that works.
8. Don't be too anxious to close out this stage.
    - When a plateau is reached, let things rest and then start again.

Stage Two

1. When all ideas are recorded, review all suggestions.
2. Combine identical ideas.
3. Consider all factors associated with each idea; determine pros and cons of each idea.
4. Identify any conditions or special circumstances needed for each idea.

Stage Three

1. Identify the ideas that meet the most needs of those involved.
2. Identify the ideas that are most feasible in terms of conditions and special circumstances.

Stage Four

1. Reach a consensus about which idea to implement.

Negotiating is back and forth communication designed to reach an agreement.

1. Negotiation is a process in which conflict is resolved without coercion or aggression.
2. Helps both parties state their individual needs.
3. Focuses on interests rather than positions.
4. Generates options for mutual gain.
5. Relies on effective communication skills.

Steps to negotiation include:

1. Stating the problem.
2. Stating what is wanted and why.
3. Evaluating options.
4. Creating win-win situations.
5. Creating an agreement.

Reaching a consensus is resolving a problem or making a decision or taking a stand through compromise.

1. All members support it—no member may oppose it.
2. Consensus is not necessarily an unanimous vote—it may not represent everyone's first choice.
3. Consensus is not a majority vote. In a majority vote only the majority get something they are happy with—the minority may get something they don't want at all.

Common causes of conflict within a group or between group members include:

1. Conflicts over resources:
   - Occur when two or more people want the same thing.
   - Typically are the easiest to identify and resolve.
   - The issue, the resource, is usually the focus of the conflict.
2. Conflicts over psychological needs:
   - Can involve power, friendships, belonging, and accomplishment.
   - Are more difficult to resolve because motivations are less obvious.
   - The real issue often fails to be resolved and conflicts often occur again.
3. Conflicts involving values:
   - Very personal conflicts involving individual belief systems.
   - Often difficult to resolve the real issue.
   - Resolution can mean a mutual acknowledgment of differences.

Conflict usually indicates that something needs to be changed.

- Winning means getting what you want or need.
- When winning becomes the focus, it is hard to reach a solution.

Win-Win	Everyone feels good because everyone wins and no one loses.
Win-Lose	Nothing good will result; promotes distrust and resentment.
Lose-Lose	No one is satisfied.

Approaches to conflict resolution include:

1. Avoidance
   - Many people choose to avoid conflict because they believe conflict is bad.
   - Avoidance can be in the form of **denial** which involves the repression of reactions and emotions.
   - People in denial may appear to be unaffected by the conflict, but are usually left feeling resentful, hurt, or angry.
   - Denial can lead to further conflict because problems are not resolved.
   - Extreme denial can also result in thinking badly of ourselves.
   - Avoidance can also be expressed through **accommodating** behaviors.

- Accommodating means agreeing rather than disagreeing because it is easier.
- Accommodating behaviors include apologizing, finding reasons to justify a difference, or adjusting opinions or behaviors to bring them into alignment with someone else's.
- The effectiveness of accommodating depends upon the importance of the conflict.

2. Confrontation
   - Usually has a win-lose attitude about conflict.
   - Determined to win by proving they are right.
   - Can involve aggressive behavior.
   - Is seldom effective because there is no real resolution.
   - The use of power over the other person is a form of confrontation.
3. Problem solving
   - Conflict is viewed as natural and focuses on finding a solution that will be satisfactory to all parties.
   - Compromise is a common form of problem solving and involves each party giving up something—can be effective if what is given up is not perceived as important.
   - Collaboration is a part of problem solving and involves finding a solution that meets both parties' needs—strives for a win-win situation.

Basic steps toward conflict resolution include:

1. Each party describing individual wants, needs, or concerns.
2. Each party describing individual feelings.
3. Each party carefully listening to and trying to understand the other party's wants, needs, or concerns.
4. Both parties jointly defining the specific problem.
5. Both parties considering all possible solutions.
6. Both parties working to find a mutually acceptable win/win solution to the problem.

Guidelines for healthy management of conflict include:

1. Clearly state your needs or concerns and do not argue blindly.
2. Avoid changing your mind just to agree.
3. Be assertive—not aggressive.
4. Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose.
5. Keep your focus on issues, not personalities.
6. Concentrate on problem solving and collaboration.
7. Try for the most acceptable to everyone.
8. Avoid prolonged two-way exchanges.
9. Use deliberate pauses for thought or to cool down.
10. Explain differences and build on similarities.

RESOURCES

There are four types of resources that can enhance and support collaborative efforts:

1. Environmental resources within the group.

• Connectedness, a common understanding, a shared vision and a group mission, and effective communication systems.

2. In-kind resources.

• What each member can contribute such as meeting rooms, equipment, and supplies.

3. Financial resources.

• Money or funding—however, collaborative efforts that focus solely on obtaining money are more likely to fail than those that form to find solutions to problems or because they share a vision.

4. Human resources.

• Human resources are the most important asset in collaboration and include investments of time, expertise, and energy. Human investment is the most crucial for sustaining collaborative efforts.

Types of resources for community-based planning efforts include, but are not limited to:

1. Human resources.
    - Time.
    - Expertise.
    - Commitment.
    - Responsibilities.
    - Leadership.
2. Financial resources.
    - Grants (grant writing).
    - Donations or contributions (fundraising).
    - Membership dues.
    - Revenues from the sale of goods and services.
3. Goods and services.
    - Facilities.
    - Equipment.
    - Supplies.
    - Transportation.
    - Communications.
    - Copying and printing.
    - Child care.

4. Training and technical assistance resources.
    - Expertise.
    - Materials.
    - Mentoring.
    - Workshops, seminars, conferences.

Successful groups must be able to manage a variety of resources, in particular they must:

1. Determine resource needs.
2. Identify available resources.
3. Begin sharing within the group.
4. Expand resource search to community.
5. Investigate resources available outside the community.

Resources are necessary for:

- The **process** of coalition building, collaboration, and community-based planning.
- The **product** of community-based planning—a comprehensive, coordinated delivery system of services for adult learners.

Process resources for coalition building, collaboration, and community-based planning include those resources needed for:

- Recruiting group members.
- Establishing group ground rules and leadership.
- Conducting community-wide needs assessments.
- Developing a common base of knowledge.
- Building of trust among group members.
- Eliminating turf issues and feelings of competition among members.
- Facilitation of constructive group discussion.
- Identification of member roles and delegation of member responsibilities.
- Procedures for group problem solving, decision making, and reaching a consensus.
- Establishing a shared vision.
- Creating a group mission.
- Setting group priorities and goals.
- Designing action plans to implement goals.
- Implementing ongoing evaluation strategies to measure progress made toward attainment of goals.

Product resources are those needed to:

- Establish and maintain a comprehensive, coordinated delivery system of services for adults.
- Improve adult learning.

Resources can be divided into four main categories: (1) human resources, (2) financial resources, (3) training and technical assistance resources, and (4) goods and support services resources.

Human Resources

Are necessary for both the process and products of community-based planning and include (1) expertise, (2) leadership, (3) visioning, (4) commitment, and (5) manpower at both the local and state levels.

1. Expertise

A. Process expertise in all aspects of coalition building.

- Expertise in group member recruitment strategies.
- Expertise in identifying adult learner stakeholders.
- Knowledge of local stakeholders.
- Expertise in group dynamics.
- Expertise in group leadership strategies.
- Expertise in designing, developing, and conducting community-wide needs assessments.
- Expertise in the types of questions to be asked to identify adult learner needs.
- Expertise in the types of information needed to develop a common base of knowledge regarding the needs of adult learners.
- Expertise in developing a shared vision.
- Expertise in creating a group mission.
- Expertise in setting group priorities—reaching a consensus.
- Expertise in setting short and long-term goals.
- Expertise in designing action plans to implement goals.
- Expertise in the design of ongoing evaluation strategies to measure progress made toward attainment of goals.
- Expertise in the implementation of evaluation strategies.
- Expertise in the analysis and effective use of evaluation results.

B. Process expertise in community-based strategic planning.

- Expertise in identifying and dealing effectively with turf issues.
- Expertise in decreasing feelings of competition and building trust among members.
- Expertise in the facilitation of constructive group discussion.
- Expertise in identifying member roles.
- Expertise in delegating member responsibilities.
- Expertise in group problem solving, decision making, and reaching a consensus.

• Commitment to the evaluation and ongoing improvement of progress made toward attainment of goals.

B. Commitment to the process of community-based strategic planning.

• Commitment to building trust among group members.

• Commitment to eliminating turf issues and feelings of competition among members.

• Member commitment to group roles and responsibilities.

C. Product commitment to the development or improvement of a comprehensive, coordinated delivery system of services for adults.

• Commitment to cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.

5. Manpower

A. Process manpower for coalition building.

• Stakeholder representation.

• Active group members.

• Shared leadership.

• Manpower needed to design, develop, and conduct a community-wide needs assessment.

• Manpower needed to implement action plans.

• Manpower needed to design and implement ongoing evaluation strategies to measure progress made toward attainment of goals.

B. Process manpower for community-based strategic planning.

• Manpower necessary to perform group roles and responsibilities.

• Manpower necessary for group problem solving, decision making, and reaching a consensus.

C Product manpower for the development or improvement of a comprehensive, coordinated delivery system of services for adult learners.

• Manpower necessary to develop a comprehensive system of services for adult learners.

• Manpower necessary to develop and maintain a coordinated system of services for adult learners.

• Manpower necessary to deliver services to adult learners.

Financial Resources

Include grants, wages, stipends, cash contributions, fundraising, and in-kind contributions or sharing of facilities, equipment, manpower, and expertise.

1. Financial resources that may be necessary for the process of coalition building.

• For expertise, manpower, and materials necessary to recruit a diverse group of adult education

stakeholders.

- For expertise, manpower, and materials necessary to develop a base of common knowledge, shared vision, and group mission.
- For expertise, manpower, and materials necessary to set short and long-term goals.
- For expertise, manpower, and materials necessary to establish a shared leadership.
- For staff time or manpower contributed to group meetings and activities.
- For printing, copying, and mailing of group minutes, announcements, and other materials.
- For telephone and fax communication among members between meetings.
- For expertise, manpower, and materials necessary to design, develop, and conducting a community-wide needs assessment.
- For expertise, manpower, and materials necessary to implement action plans to attain goals.
- For expertise, manpower, and materials necessary to design and implement ongoing evaluation strategies to measure progress made toward attainment of goals.
- For expertise and manpower necessary to analyze and use effectively evaluation results.

2. Financial resources that may be necessary for the process of community-based strategic planning.

- For expertise to build trust and eliminate turf issues and feelings of competition among members.
- For the facilitation of constructive group discussion, problem solving, decision making, and reaching a consensus.

3. Product financial resources that may be necessary for the development or improvement of a comprehensive, coordinated delivery system of services for adult learners.

- For expertise and manpower necessary to design a comprehensive system of services for adult learners.
- For expertise and manpower necessary to developed a coordinated system of services for adult learners.
- For expertise and manpower necessary to deliver coordinated services for adult learners.

Training and Technical Assistance Resources

Include specialized expertise, training materials, inservice training, staff development activities, sharing of expertise among group members, cross training, resource centers, town meetings, forums, conferences, workshops, and other educational and skill building activities and materials.

1. Training and technical assistance resources necessary for the process of coalition building.

- To recruit group members.

- To establish group ground rules and leadership.
- To design, develop, and conducting a community-wide needs assessment.
- To develop a common base of knowledge.
- To establish a shared vision.
- To create a group mission.
- To identify group priorities.
- To set short and long-term group goals.
- To design and implement action plans to attain goals.
- To design and implement ongoing evaluation strategies to measure progress made toward attainment of goals.
- To analyze and use effectively evaluation results.

2. Training and technical assistance resources necessary for the process of community-based strategic planning.

- To build trust among group members.
- To eliminate turf issues and feelings of competition among members.
- To facilitate constructive group discussion.
- To identify member roles and to delegate member responsibilities.
- To implement procedures for group problem solving, decision making, and reaching a consensus.

3. Product training and technical assistance resources necessary for the development or improvement of a comprehensive, coordinated delivery system of services for adult learners.

- To design a comprehensive system of services for adult learners.
- To develop a coordinated system of services for adult learners.
- To deliver coordinated services for adult learners.

Goods and Support Services Resources

Include, but are not limited to, facility space, office furniture, equipment, communications (telephone, fax, e-mail, postage), printing and copying, clerical support, transportation, and child care. These resources may be purchased or contributed (in-kind).

EVALUATION

Groups should evaluate both the process and the product outcomes of community-based planning.

1. The community-based planning process outcomes
    - Coalition building and collaboration.
2. The community-based planning products.
    - A comprehensive, coordinated delivery system of services for adult learners.
    - Increased adult learner gains.

An ongoing, comprehensive evaluation is necessary for monitoring progress made toward the attainment of desired outcomes and ensuring group success and, as such, must be an integral part of the collaborative process.

- Collaboration and community-based planning efforts should be routinely monitored and evaluated.
- Evaluation should include measures to assess project accountability, effectiveness, and impact.

Two recommended evaluation instruments follow:

1. The *Coalition Evaluation Instrument* developed by Applebee (see References).
2. *Impact Measures* adapted from Bergstrom et al (see References).

Coalition Evaluation Instrument (adapted from Applebee, G.)

Describe your experience and perceptions by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 5 and making additional comments or suggestions for action.

1. Goals: There must be common goals that are shared and understood by all members.
Rate the level of understanding group members have of goals.

Low				High
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

2. Outcomes: The group must identify outcomes that can be achieved by working together.
Rate the awareness level of group members in regard to outcomes and the benefits of those outcomes to adult learners.

Low				High
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

3. Leadership: Leadership must be able to move the group toward goals in a timely manner.
Rate the group leadership.

Low				High
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

4. Commitment: Members must be committed to working together to achieve established goals.
Rate the commitment of group members.

Low				High
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

5. Communication: It is important to establish systems of communication among groups.
Rate the communication effectiveness of the group.

Low				High
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

6. Turf: The group should be aware of each member's area of concentration and commitment. Rate the openness and resolution of turf concerns in the group.

Low				High
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

7. Diverse Representation: The group should include a diverse representation of stakeholders sharing an interest in and commitment to adult learning.
Rate the level of diversity in the group.

Low				High
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

Impact Measures

(Adapted from Bergstrom, A. et al)

Impact measures should be defined to measure project impact and articulate results that support sustainable change toward the desired vision and provide evidence of program effectiveness.

> **Impact Measures** are specific measures related to any outcome defined by collaboration. **Impact Measures** articulate the improved results which support sustainable changes or outcomes.

There are four recommended categories of community-based planning Impact Measures:

1. **Adult Learner Impact:** Behavioral changes of adult learners as a result of collaboration and community-based planning efforts.

2. **Services Development:** Changes occurring within groups, agencies, and organizations as a result of collaboration and community-based planning efforts.

3. **Systems Development:** Changes occurring in how individuals, groups, agencies, and organizations work together toward a shared vision and common goals.

4. **Resource Development:** A range of resources including time, skills, money, and people realigned to focus on the attainment of a shared vision and common goals.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY

• Working relationships with the media must be developed to establish formal communication channels within the community for the transmission of information from the group to the public and to community leaders.
• It is equally important to identify natural and informal communication channels to obtain community support and acquisition of needed resources.

Groups need an effective, comprehensive public relations plan before, during, and after the community-based planning group forms.

1. To create community awareness to generate support and participation.
2. To develop a positive public image of group.
3. To market or sell the group and its mission as an asset to the community and necessary for community development.
4. To mobilize the community.
5. To sustain action and results.

Promotional messages must ask the following questions to target promotional efforts:

1. What is the message?
2. What specific steps are we asking the community to take?
3. How will we promote the message?
4. What specific steps will we undertake?
5. Who will be responsible?
6. What will it cost?
7. Where will we obtain resources?
8. When will we finish each step?

Sustainability is the community's ability to maintain community-based planning efforts in order to continue responding to the changing needs and conditions of adult learners and adult education.

• Groups must be aware of the political climate of the community and how it can be used in the positive and ongoing development of collaboration.

In order to sustain collaboration efforts and promote growth of the group, it is important to:

1. Prevent stagnation.
2. Meet opposition, criticism, and other barriers with success.
3. Focus on continuing assessment of community needs.
4. Maintain commitment of group members.
5. Develop effective information and communication systems to promote community support.

Political support is important in developing and sustaining collaboration, particularly for changes in policymaking and the implementation of policy.

• It is necessary for community-based planning groups to know which decision makers are willing to discuss, accept, and negotiate new ideas; which are open to emerging ideas and resolving conflict; and which need to be influenced and how.

Systems must be developed and instituted to provide sustained membership, resources, and strategic program planning.

1. Guidelines for terms of office and the replacement of members should be defined.
2. Resource development efforts must be maintained to assure the necessary levels of revenue, time, and people are available to conduct community-based planning efforts.

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